



DENTON HALL AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS

W. W. TOMLINSON

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No. 169

St. John's

To

W. H. Knowles, Esq., F. R. I. B. A.

With

W. A. I'Anson's Compliments
and kind regards -

Wentworth

17th October 1895.



T. Eyre Macklin.

SOUTH-EAST ENTRANCE TO GARDEN, DENTON HALL.

DENTON HALL

AND

ITS ASSOCIATIONS

BY

WILLIAM WEAVER TOMLINSON

AUTHOR OF "THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO NORTHUMBERLAND," "HISTORICAL
NOTES ON CULLERCOATS, WHITLEY, AND MONKSEATON," ETC., ETC.

With Drawings by T. Eyre Macklin, and other Illustrations

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“ Perhaps it is an idle kind of superstitious fancy, but it seems to me that when a fair inheritance is transmitted to a family, they ought to feel a certain degree of tenderness to the abode of the ancestors from whom it is derived, which ought at least to sink quietly by the silent depredations of time, and not be torn down by the rude hand of human violence.”—*Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. iii. p. 11c.

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INTRODUCTION.



ARCHÆOLOGICALLY, Denton Hall is a building of considerable interest, being one of the few examples of Jacobean architecture extant in Northumberland, and one that retains many of its original features unaltered.

Till the beginning of the seventeenth century the gentry of the North of England, such of them at least who did not occupy mansions in the walled towns, dwelt in castles, and towers which were castles on a small scale. These were designed more with a view to the security than the domestic comfort of the inmates.

After the Union, when disturbances on the Borders became less frequent, many of the leading knights and esquires of Northumberland began to build manor-houses more in accordance with the ideas of comfort prevalent in the midland and southern counties than the grim-looking towers in which their ancestors had resisted the incursions of Scottish reivers. The manor-house of Belsay, for instance, was built in 1614 by Sir Gilbert Middleton, that of Dilston in 1616 by Sir Francis Radcliffe, and that of Chipchase—which Mr. C. J. Bates considers the finest example of Jacobean architecture in

Northumberland—in 1621 by Sir Cuthbert Heron. The nucleus of them all, however, was the older mediæval tower.

Nearer the Border the fortified type of manor-house remained unaltered till a much later period. Coupland Castle, built in 1619 by Sir George Wallace, differs in few particulars from its predecessors.

It was during this first quarter of the seventeenth century that two members of the Errington family acquired large estates—one by the successful working of coal-mines at Denton, the other by an alliance with a wealthy local family at Ponteland. Mark Errington built the manor-house at Ponteland early in the century, incorporating with it the ancient castle of Sir Aymon de Athol, and Anthony Errington built Denton Hall in 1622.

Though evidently designed under the influence of the older type of Border dwellings, Denton Hall was a distinct departure from the architectural traditions of the North of England, and illustrates the beneficial change which had come over this part of the country since the Union. It is the earliest example of a class of manor-house not common in Northumberland, a later one being that at Holywell, built by Ralph Bates in 1656.

Interesting as a building, especially when considered in relation to the important period in North-country history during which it was erected, it is also interesting as the home of a branch of a famous Northumbrian family, the Erringtons, and as one of the seats of the “Queen of the Blue-Stockings.”

The imagination is strangely stirred at the thought of the many lives with which these old walls have been so intimately associated

during the lapse of 272 years. In this house lived those who heard the booming of the Scottish cannon as, mounted on the top of Newburn church tower, they opened fire on the forces of Lord Conway entrenched on the haughs on the other side of the river, and who saw on the high ridge above the Tyne at Whickham the camp-fires of Cromwell's army, which was shortly afterwards to win the decisive battle of Dunbar, those who drank healths to the king over the water, and those who were scared by the rumours of a French invasion.

Memorable storms have swept over the old house, notably those of December 1st, 1763, January 7th, 1839, December 28th, 1879, and March 14th and 15th, 1888, but it has withstood them all, and its venerable walls, mantled with ivy and touched with the grace which nearly three centuries have lent to them, still greet the rising and the setting sun, not greatly altered since the day they were built.

"It is believed," wrote Mr. Sidney Gibson in 1848, "that there are MS.S. and title deeds in the Rokeby family which would elucidate the history of Denton Hall." I have endeavoured to gain access to these sources of information, but without success. I regret this, because, although I have made diligent search in every local work which might contain a reference to Denton, and in many manuscripts hitherto unpublished, I have not been able to make my account of the later connection of the Errington family and the early connection of the Rogers family with the hall as complete as I could have wished it to be.

I take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Mr. Richard Welford and Mr. Walter B. Thomas for several particulars concerning the Rogers family. My thanks are also due to Mr. W. E. Nicholson for permission to examine some old plans and documents relating to the Denton Collieries in the library of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, and to Mr. W. H. Knowles for his kindness in preparing for me plans of the ground and first floors of Denton Hall.

DENTON HALL.

THE SEAT OF THE LOYAL ERRINGTONS.

*Here, in thy shadow, heavy-mulioned hall,
The quiet beauty of an older day
Lingers, and lo! as, charmed beneath its sway,
We sit and watch the mellow sunbeams fall
Through summer leaves on roof and gable tall,
The world we know so well seems far away,
And from that ocean but the lightest spray
Is driven against this ivy-covered wall.*

*Some magic in thy stones rolls back the years,
Among the roses old-world voices sing
The daintiest songs of Herrick, and in our ears
The rhymes of Lovelace to Lucrecia ring,
Stirring our hearts to battle for the king,
Whom here we toast like gallant cavaliers.*

W. W. T.



EARLY HISTORY OF DENTON.

DENTON in Northumberland, which for several centuries has been divided into East and West Denton, dates from the time of the Anglian invasion of Northumbria during the sixth and seventh centuries. It was originally a stockaded enclosure or clearing adjoining the Dene—a picturesque little gorge in the northern slope of the Tyne valley, the sides of which are still clothed with vigorous wild wood. The name is descriptive of this situation.¹

¹ Denton is a very common place-name in England. We find parishes, townships, or hamlets bearing this name in Cumberland, Durham, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Sussex, and Yorkshire, as well as in Northumberland.

That the earlier inhabitants of Britain had a village here or in the neighbourhood seems highly probable from the discovery about the year 1813, a little more than a quarter of a mile south-west of the Roman Wall, and almost in a direct line to the same point from Denton Hall, of one of their burial-places, which contained a small urn and fragments of bones.¹ We can, however, readily imagine how hurriedly and in what consternation they would abandon their rude huts and defences when the soldiers of Hadrian began digging the deep trenches and throwing up the great mounds of the vallum. At a later period there was a Roman garrison at Denton occupying the mile-castle, which, with a portion of the great barrier here, was built by Julius Rufus and his company of soldiers.

Of the vicissitudes of the Anglian village or homestead at Denton, built no doubt from the ruins of the mighty wall, we know nothing.

It is in the Testa de Nevill, about 1240, that we meet with the earliest documentary reference to Denton. At that time Hawise of Newham held the manor—one of the members of the barony of Whalton—from the heir of John Fitz-Robert, an ancestor of the Claverings, by the service of a knight's fee of the old feoffment.²

A few years later, in 1252, John Rydall occurs as having free warren in Denton, Harle, and Newham.³ In 1256 this John de Ridel is styled lord of Denton.⁴ He was at this time engaged in a dispute with Robert de Nevill (of Raby), Robert de Wautham,

¹ *Archæol. Ælian.*, vol. i. p. 101, "An account of the opening of an ancient grave near Denton," etc., by Edward Woodhouse, of Sunderland. The urn is now in the Black Gate Museum, and was presented to the Society by Mr. Woodhouse, of Scotswood, on January 4th, 1815.

² Hodgson's *Northumberland*, Part iii., vol. i. p. 204.

³ *Calendarium Rotulorum Chartarum*, 36 Henry III., mem. ii. Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, Part iii., vol. ii. p. 390.

⁴ Assize Roll, 40 Henry III., Surtees Soc., vol. lxxviii. p. 99.

John de Grusor', Adam de Divelyn, Evard de Bladene and William his brother, Richard Fitz-Gunild, Ralph Fitz-Richard, Walter Sleg', Richard Deriket, Robert Stalbe, Richard de Kewes, and William Rasket, with regard to a weir in the Tyne below Denton. It appears that four years previous to this date he had removed the weir, which had belonged to his grandfather and father before him, from one part of his freehold land to another. Robert de Nevill disputed his claim to a weir, as interfering, probably, with the rights in the Tyne pertaining to the manor of Winlaton. Accompanied by the persons mentioned above and a great many others, "armed with bows and arrows, and bearing picks, etc., he had thrown down the weir." The decision of the Court was adverse to the defendants, the jurors holding that John de Ridel was quite within his right in removing the weir, seeing that it was the custom of this part of the country for persons possessing weirs to remove them whenever it was found necessary to do so, owing to the weirs getting choked up with sand. John de Ridel was awarded 40s. damages, and the weir was ordered to be reconstructed.¹

This same year a tragedy occurred in the house of John de Ridel; his servant, also called John de Ridel, being killed by Walter de Chendal, who fled and was outlawed. The village of Denton was amerced for not capturing him, and the villages of Kenton and Newburn for not taking part in the pursuit when the hue and cry was raised.²

In 1279 one Ralph Mays was killed by falling from a horse in a field at Denton.³ The same year Denton is amerced in a sum of half a mark for wrongly appraising, with other villages in the neighbourhood, the value of the cattle of Robert le Braccur, who had hanged himself, and the value of a horse from which Alexander de

¹ Assize Roll, 40 Henry III., Surtees Soc., vol. lxxxviii. pp. 14, 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³ Assize Roll, 7 Edward I., Surtees Soc., vol. lxxxviii. pp. 98, 99.

Choppewell had fallen into the Tyne, the horse being, in consequence, a deadand.¹

At this time the barony of Whalton was held by Robert Fitz-Roger. A carucate of land in the vill of Denton was held by Robert de Hephale, in 1304, as appears from the escheats of that year.²

A family of considerable local influence, which we first meet with in the time of Edward II., took its name from Denton and had property there. Denton Chare probably formed part of its possessions in Newcastle, and Denton Tower, it is supposed, was built by some member of the family.

In 1316 a John de Denton appears as the master of the Hospital of St. Edmund's in Gateshead.³ He died in 1325, and on the 1st of February of the following year a number of articles given by him to the hospital—tunics, dalmatics, stoles, missals, psalters, etc.—were inventoried by his executors, John de Pollowe and John de Darlington, and delivered to his successor, Roland, Archbishop of Armagh.⁴

A few years later we find another John de Denton, a burgess of Newcastle, and probably son of the master of St. Edmund's Hospital, occupying the highest positions which the town could confer on him. In 1329, in conjunction with Robert de Tughale, he was Collector of Customs for the port of Newcastle; from 1329 to 1332, and again in 1343, he was bailiff of the town; for the years 1333-34, 1336-37, 1337-38, 1341-42, mayor; and for 1331, 1332, 1334, and 1340 Member of Parliament for the town.⁵

¹ Assize Roll, 7 Edward I., Surtees Soc., vol. lxxxviii. pp. 34, 35.

² Eschaet' and Inquisitiones, Anno 32 Edward I., Hodgson's *Northumberland*, Part iii., vol. i. p. 54.

³ Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. i. p. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 63.

⁵ John de Denton, Mayor of Newcastle, was a witness to a lease granted on 3rd June 1334, by Robert de la Vale, Knt., to Ric. Scot, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne,

In 1335, the king, in recognition of the services which John de Denton had rendered in the Scottish wars, granted to him the reversion of the manor of Woodhorn,¹ and, in 1336, the vill of Newbiggin² after the death of Maria St. Paul, Countess of Pembroke, on payment of an annual rent of £10, 6s. The recipient of so many civic honours and royal favours came to a shameful end. In 1344 certain charges were made against him—(1) that he had received from the hands of Alan Noble, a Scot, a sum of money on condition that he, with other traitors, should hand over the town of Newcastle to the Scots on the vigil of the king's birthday in the sixteenth year of his reign [1342]; (2) that he had undertaken to open the West Gate for three consecutive nights that the Scots might enter therein; and (3) that at the time when David the Bruce lay at Hedwyn-Laws with his army he had supplied him and other Scots with victuals through one Adam Palfreyman, his servant. To the charges Denton made no reply but remained mute. He was cast into prison, and there, in an irregular manner, put to death.³

This powerful but not irreproachable man for the last ten years of his life had a considerable interest in Denton.

On November 17th, 1334, Richard Halden, chaplain, conveyed to him one whole moiety of the manor of Denton and one whole moiety of the manor of Redewood, and two tofts and two crofts and thirty acres of land in Denton, to hold for his life, by paying to Roger Widdrington, brother and heir of John Widdrington, five marks, and on condition that after John de Denton's death the reversion of the property mentioned in the premises should go to John

of the coal [sea-coal it is called] under both moieties of "le Chestres in Benwell," on the north and the south, with right of way to the Tyne for the conveyance of it, showing that coal was worked near Denton at a very early period.—Waterford MSS., *Historical MSS. Commission*, 11th Report, Part vii., p. 70.

¹ Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. i. p. 93.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 99.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 126.

Emeldon, son of William Emeldon, clerk, and of Agnes, daughter of John de Denton, and the heirs of their bodies.¹

A few years before this date, in 1328, Sir Geoffrey Scrope, baron of Whalton, had confirmed lands in Denton, as a manor within his barony, to this Roger de Widdrington.

In 1355 Sir Gerard de Widdrington granted to Edmund de Widdrington a yearly rent of ten marks out of the manor of Denton. In 1381 Adam de Fenrother, clerk, William de Meryyngton, chaplain, Hugh de Brandon, William de Chevyngton, and William de Seton, by the king's licence, assigned to the Prior and Convent of Tynemouth the manors of Denton and Redewood, saving the annual rents of ten marks and one mark. The former rent-charge was, in 1382, acknowledged to be in reversion to the use of John de Widdrington, heir of Roger, to whom, in 1393, John de Denton released his right in the lands in Northumberland which belonged to his grandfather, the noted burgess of Newcastle. Sir John de Widdrington died in 1443, a centenarian. Among the large possessions which he held at the time of his death were lands in Denton. In 1453 [31 Edward VI.] the Prior of Tynemouth let to Gerard de Widdrington all the tithes which his father had held previous to that time, and Gerard acknowledged that he was paid for the farm [rent] of Denton to that time.²

¹ Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. i. p. 87.

² Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, Part ii., vol. ii. p. 226.



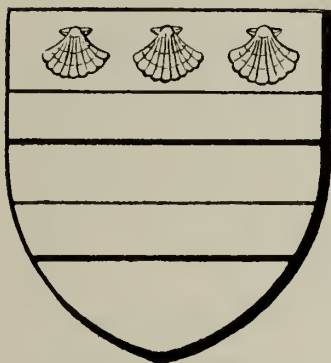
S. H. Grimm.]

DENTON HALL FROM THE SOUTH-WEST C., 1780.

THE ERRINGTONS.

Arms—Argent, two bars, in chief three escallops azure.

Crest—A unicorn's head erased, quarterly argent and gules.



EARLY in the sixteenth century we find a branch of the old Northumbrian family of Errington established at Denton. In September 1523, Roger Errington, bailiff of Denton, was examined before Edward Baxter, Mayor of Newcastle, relative to the family of "Dichand of Worsington."¹ Previous to the suppression of religious houses he held from the Nunnery of St. Bartholomew in Newcastle

"a tenement in the town of Denton," for which he paid a yearly rent of 8s.²

In 1539, as bailiff for the Crown in Elswick, Benwell, and Denton, with Dissington and Wolsington, part of the late possessions of the Monastery of Tynemouth, he accounts for the various rents in these places; among them being "xx*d.* for the free rent of John Lightfote in Denton," "xx*l.* for the farm of a coal-pit worked within the Lordship of Denton, at the rate of twenty chaldrons for every working day," and "iiij*l.* for the farm of a salmon fishery within

¹ Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. ii. p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

the waters of Tyne within the Lordship or Manor of Denton, in the tenure of the said Roger Heryngton.”¹ He had three sons, Anthony, George,² and Gilbert, from whom the East Denton, West Denton, and Ponteland branches of the family trace their descent; and one of these, Anthony, was at this time bailiff and collector of the rents in Newcastle and Gateshead.³ The name of Anthony Errington of Denton appears in a list of “the gentlemen inhabitants within the Middle Marches,” drawn up in 1541, and in a list of “gentlemen in the county of Northumberland” compiled in 1549. “Laird of Denton” he is styled in this latter document. With Anthony Mitford of Ponteland and John Musgrave of Newburn, he was responsible for the maintenance of the beacon on Heddon Law,⁴ a hill to the north-west of Denton, from which the tidings of Scottish raids must often have been flashed across the Tyne, spreading alarm throughout the neighbouring county. His son, Lancelot Errington, was the bailiff and collector in Elswick, collector in Benwell, and bailiff in Denton from the twentieth to the fortieth year of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. During this period he accounts for £6, 8s. 4d., for the farm of divers lands and tenements within the vill of Denton, for £4 for the farm of a salmon fishery in the Tyne within the Lordship of Denton, and £26, 13s. 4d. for the farm of two mines of coal within the fields of Denton, which were leased to him at that rent.⁵

Associated with Lancelot Errington in the working of these mines

¹ Gibson’s *Monastery of Tynemouth*, vol. i. p. 225.

² By will, dated 25th March 1559, George Errington of Denton, gent., desires “to be buryede in Sanct Myghel’s churche in Neuberen so nye my father as can be.”

³ Gibson’s *Monastery of Tynemouth*, vol. i. p. 229.

⁴ MSS. of Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle, *Historical MSS. Commission*, 12th Report, Appendix, Part iv. p. 39.

⁵ Gibson’s *Monastery of Tynemouth*, vol. ii., CLV.

was William Dent, who may possibly be identified with a mayor and alderman of Newcastle of that name. Lancelot's mother, it may be noted, was a daughter of Thomas Dent, alderman of Newcastle.

One of the mines seems to have lain idle for many years, and an allowance was made to Errington in 1578 of £6, 13s. 4d., half a year's rent, and in subsequent years of £13, 6s. 8d. on this account.¹

One of the witnesses examined in May 1580 in a cause between Richard Hodgson, plaintiff, and John Fenwick, Christopher Mitford, William Jenison, and Robert Mitford, defendants, touching a certain moor or waste called Fythey Moor, or Whitby Moor, was "Lancelot Errington of Denton, gentleman, 38."²

A son of this Lancelot Errington, according to one of the State papers ascribed to the year 1580, was arrested and examined in regard to a journey which he had made into France. The document, which is unfortunately imperfect, and ends abruptly before any of the particulars of the case have been disclosed, runs as follows:—

"An exa. taken of Ihon Errington sonne to Lancelot
Errington dwellyng at Denton wthin thre myles of
Newcastell.

"Being asked wher he dyd embarke he saythe he tooke shipping at the Shells [North Shields] in a frenche shipp bownde for Deape [Dieppe].

"The sayd examynat saythe y^t he hath knowen the seyd Errington not long and that the . . .

[Endorsed] "Examination of John Errington."³

It is probable that this document belongs to a case which was tried a few years later, and that the person concerning whom John Errington was examined was George Errington of Hurst Castle,⁴ who, in 1585, was arrested on suspicion of being a papal emissary.

¹ Gibson's *Monastery of Tynemouth*, vol. ii., CLV. and CLVI.

² Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. ii. p. 518.

³ *State Papers, Domestic*, Eliz., vol. cxxxviii. No. 31.

⁴ Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. iii. pp. 29, 30.

Robert Hethfield, a merchant of Newcastle, one of the persons implicated, stated in his examination that he delivered unto George Errington, at his last going to sea, only two letters, one from Garthe to Browne of Rouen, the other from himself to his uncle Valentine Taylor, a priest in Rouen, and these, together with letters from Giles and Cuthbert Johnson, admitted by Errington to have been given to him, appear in "A note of letters found abowght Harrington [Errington],"¹ also ascribed to the earlier date.

These were days when the adherents of the old faith were cruelly persecuted by the Protestants. Seminary priests were hunted up and down the country and put to death by methods quite fiendish in their barbarity.² The leading Catholics of the district were all under strict surveillance on suspicion of harbouring and aiding the Romish fugitives.

George Errington's journeys beyond the seas³ seem to have been frequent, and it is probable that on this particular occasion John Errington accompanied him, and was one of the persons called upon to give evidence.

In 1589 the executor of Lancelot Errington, alluded to as the late collector, accounts for the rents, and we next meet with the name of Anthony Errington, his son, as collector. In 1592 this Anthony Errington accounts for £5 for the half-year's rent of a mine of coal in Denton, leased to Christopher Errington,⁴ his uncle, for a term of

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, Eliz., vol. cxxxviii. No. 32.

² Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, pp. 70, 71.

³ A George Errington, gent., born at Hirst, in Northumberland, was put to death at York, 29th November 1596, for trying to convert a Protestant. (Hodgson, *History of Northumberland*, vol. ii. pt. ii. p. 540. See also *The Catholics of York under Elizabeth*, edited by John Morris, p. 89*n*.)

⁴ George Whitfeild, of Newcastle, in his will dated October 27th, 1587, bequeathed "to Christopher Errington and his wyfe to eyther of them a crowne of 5*s*."—*Durham Wills and Inventories*, vol. ii. p. 301; Surt. Soc., vol. xxxviii. A Christopher Errington, merchant, was buried at St. Nicholas', December 3rd, 1592.

twenty-one years, by letters-patent bearing date the 14th of June 1586.¹

Denton about this time seems to have been noted for a breed of sleuth-hounds, which were used for tracking offenders. In the



DENTON VILLAGE, LOOKING WEST.

autumn of 1596 somebody broke into the town chamber of Newcastle. A man was sent to Chester-le-Street for a bitch and her owner, and a

¹ Gibson's *Monastery of Tynemouth*, vol. ii., CLVII.

dog from Denton was also engaged to assist her, and the town paid for their services in following "the scent and trod of those who broke the town chamber door," 20s. for the bitch and 2s. to the owner, and 10s. to him of Denton for the dog, besides which payments 12d. was disbursed for a horse hire going to Denton to fetch the dog.¹ This dog had been sent for the previous year to track a criminal, but for some reason or other had not been employed.²

In 1600 Elizabeth Dalton, daughter of Lancelot Errington and sister of Anthony, had a dispute with Peter Delaval respecting tithes at Elswick. William Errington of Benwell, yeoman, aged fifty-six [younger brother of Lancelot], gave evidence as to the name of Elswick, which he had known for fifty years.³

On the 18th of February 1602 a lease of a coal-mine in Denton—discovered about twenty-two years before—was granted by Queen Elizabeth to Anthony Errington and his cousin Roger Errington, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for a term of twenty-one years, at a yearly rental of £10, with a provision that should they dig any other pits they were to pay an annual rent of £10 each for them. In a short time they had dug three pits, and these seem to have been worked so profitably that the cupidity of others was aroused. The Earl of Northumberland claimed that the greatest part of the coal-mine belonged to him and not to the Crown; and one William Court, clerk to Mr. Paddon, auditor of the county, also cast a covetous eye on these possessions, for on the lessees travelling up to London in Trinity Term, 1610, to effect a purchase of the mines, they found they had been forestalled; Court, by information of John Lyons, receiver of Northumberland and Durham, having caused the coal-mine to be passed with the contractors for leases in reversion for

¹ Welford's *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. iii. p. 109.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 99.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 146.

sixty years, though not contained in "the great entaile," and in conjunction with one William Bacon, a tool of Lyons's, obtained a lease of the same. The Erringtons thereupon addressed a petition to the Earl of Salisbury, the Lord High Treasurer, praying that Court and Bacon might be made to surrender these estates.

The case was examined by Sir James Altham, Knight, who gave a decision in favour of the petitioners, advising that Court and Bacon be ordered to surrender the lease to the Crown, and that they be repaid the sums which they had disbursed to obtain it. This suggestion was adopted, and on the 8th of December Robert Chapman¹ (who seems to have taken the place of Bacon) and William Court surrendered each a moiety of the lease of the coal-mines of Denton, and received £197 and £199, 11s. 8d. respectively.

The documents relating to this case (see Appendix I.) contain, besides some valuable bits of information relating to coal-mining at this period, some interesting particulars of the topography of Denton. The boundaries of the property leased were

"from Denton Burne, where it falleth into the water of Tyne by the same water towards the west, vnto the bounde betweene Denton and Newborne, and from thence by the same bounde towards the north vnto the bounde betweene Denton and Newbigging, and by the same bounde towards the east vnto the bounde betweene Denton and Keynton, and from thence by the boundes betweene Keynton Bennell als Benwell and Denton to a close called Nunes Close towards the south, and by the west pte of the said close to the arrable lande called Newraynes in the feildes of Denton aforesaide, and from thence betweene the arable [land] called Langbanke and the Raynes aforesaid vnto the village of Denton aforesaide, and from thence by the waye called the old Cole waye to a place called the vpperbarke hill, and of the south pte of barkehill to the Ryver called Dentonbourne vnto the saide water of Tyne."

Two years later, on 20th April, 9 James I., the coal-mines dug, sought, or gained in the fields of Elswick were granted to another

¹ Buried 1622, Jan. 16, Robert Chapman, merchant.—St. Nicholas' Register.

member of the Denton family, Robert Errington [uncle or cousin to the above Anthony], and Timothy Draper, at a yearly rent of £30.¹

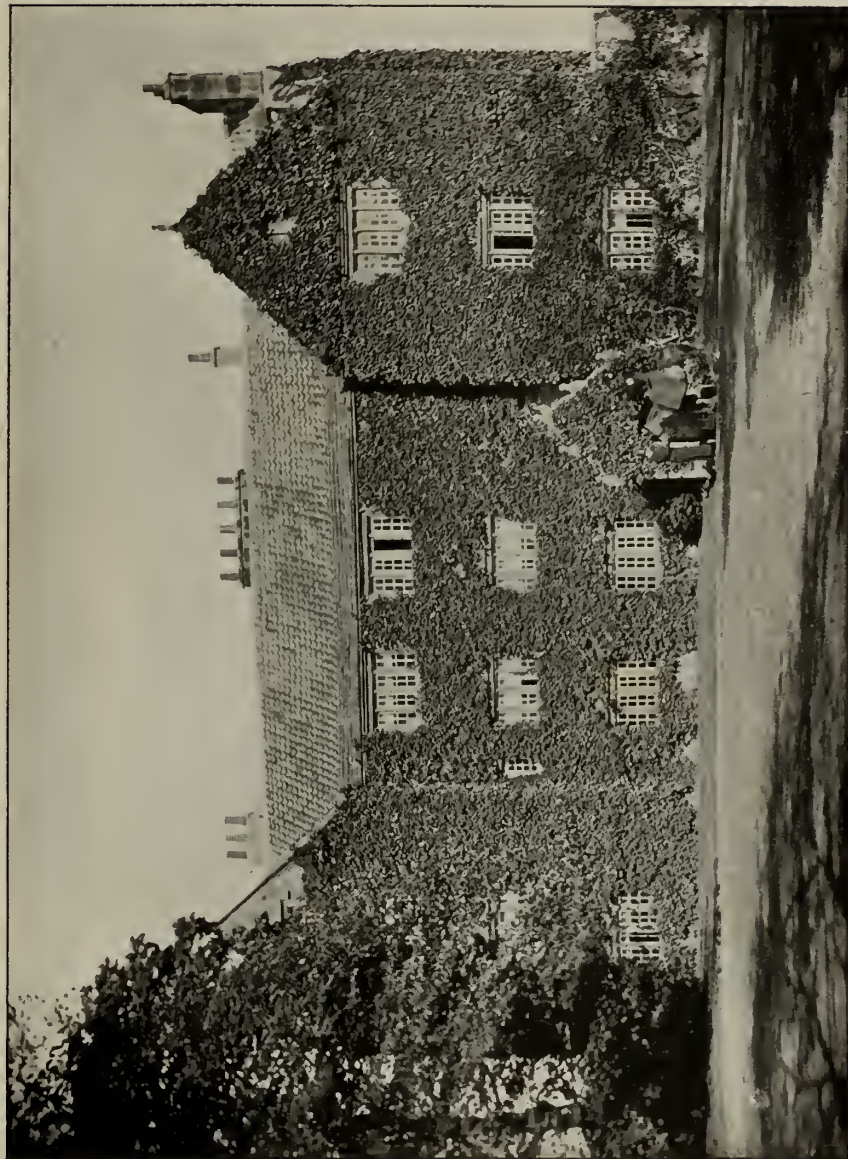
Roger Errington died in November 1616. By his will nuncupative, made on his death-bed in the presence of James Haull, Thomas Carre, and his wife Isabell, on Wednesday, 6th of November 1616, he devised "thatt outt of his colery and other his goods and chattells his debtes should be first paid, and out of the residue that should remayne his wif Isable to have a third part, and £100 in money to be paid to Robert Errington, sonne by the said Isable, and one other £100 to the child she Isable is now going with if the sd child be borne alive; the residue that shall remayne is willed and bequeathed to his three children by Alice his first wife—viz., Anthony, Margrett, and James Errington, to be equally divided amongstt them, and of this his last will he made the said Anthony, Margarett, and James Errington his executors." He was buried in St. Nicholas' churchyard on Nov. 8th, 1616.

At this time there were two branches of the Errington family at Denton. Anthony, married to Dorothy, daughter of Gilbert Errington, of Wolsington, being the head of one, and Mark, married to Catherine, daughter of Nicholas Tempest, of Thorneley, being the head of the other. Another branch of the family had recently established itself at Ponteland, Mark Errington, of Wolsington, having by his marriage with Margaret, daughter of Jasper Mitford, acquired considerable property there.

Anthony Errington, of East Denton, having frustrated the design of Court and Lyons, to which reference has just been made, purchased the mines and lands at Denton.²

¹ Gibson's *Monastery of Tynemouth*, vol. ii. p. 242.

² On the 17th December 1652, Thomas Holmes, of Denton, yeoman, aged about sixty-five years, being examined before the Commissioners for Compounding Estates, stated that he was servant to this Anthony Errington, and well knew that he "was owner of the Lordship and Township of Denton, of the moiety of the colliery there, two copyhold farms in Elswicke, a messuage in Lemington, a colliery in Benwell, and lands in Northseaton. Deponent believed that the said Anthony purchased all the said premises."—*Interregnum Papers*, G. 130, fo. 605.



WEST FRONT OF DENTON HALL.

A few years later he built the present hall, which bears the following door-head inscription :—

E
1622
A D



DENTON HALL PORCH.

The initials are those of Anthony and Dorothy Errington, and the

date is that of the building of the hall, the architectural features of which are Jacobean in character.

Anthony Errington was one of the grand jurors for Northumberland in 1628.¹ This year the third subsidy granted by the Parliament to the king was levied throughout the country, the assessment on the lands of Anthony Errington, of East Denton, being £3, 12s., and on those of Mark Errington, of West Denton, £1, 4s.²

Anthony Errington died at Denton in 1632,³ leaving two sons, Lancelot, who inherited his estate, and Ralph. The latter died unmarried in 1635.³ Lancelot was one of the grand jurors for Northumberland in 1638.⁴ He was also one of the coalowners of Tyneside who this year subscribed to a singular agreement. This agreement, entered into by the King of the first part, the Governor, Stewards, and Brethren of the Hoastmen of the second part, and the coalowners of the third part, stipulated that for twenty-one years all "good and merchantable coals laden aboard any ship or other vessel within the river Tyne should be sold to his Majesty, his heirs and successors only, or to some other of the fraternity who should sell the same to his Majesty by the hands of those appointed factors being hoastmen, who were themselves appointed by the governing body of eleven chosen out of the general fellowship of hoastmen."⁵

This was one of those attempts at monopoly which contributed so largely to the downfall of the throne.

When the Great Rebellion broke out a few years later, the

¹ *Archæologia Æliana*, 4to, vol. ii. p. 317.

² Exchequer Lay Subsidy $1\frac{5}{8}$, Northumberland.

³ "The said Anthony died at Denton about twenty years ago. Ralph, second son of the said Anthony, died about seventeen years ago."—Examination of John Fenwicke of Newcastle, 17th December 1652, Interregnum Papers, G. 139, fo. 605.

⁴ *Archæologia Æliana*, vol. ii. p. 321.

⁵ "Archæology of the Coal Trade," by T. John Taylor, *Proc. of Arch. Inst. at Newcastle*, vol. i. pp. 178, 222.

Erringtons of Northumberland and Durham at once declared for the king. Lancelot Errington of East Denton, Mark of West Denton, and his three sons, Nicholas of Ponteland, and other members of the family were among the first to join the loyal Earl of Newcastle when, in the early part of 1642, he raised a troop of horse consisting of 120 of his friends and tenants in Northumberland, and also a regiment of foot from the same county, and so was able to put the town of Newcastle into a state of defence, and to garrison Tynemouth Castle, preserving for the king the key of the North, and securing the mouth of the Tyne.¹

Of the exploits of the Erringtons in the Civil Wars we know but little. "Captain Francis Errington, of Denton, in Northumberland," fell at Rotherham,² probably during the attack made on that town by the Earl of Newcastle on Thursday, May 4th, 1643.³ To which

¹ *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle.* Ed. 1886, p. 20.

"After his Majesty King Charles the First had entrusted my Lord with the power of raising forces for his Majesty's service, he effected that which never any subject did, nor was (in all probability) able to do; for though many great and noble persons did also raise forces for his Majesty, yet they were brigades, rather than well-formed armies, in comparison to my Lord's. The reason was, that my Lord, by his mother, the daughter of Cuthbert, Lord Ogle, being allied to most of the most ancient families in Northumberland, and other the northern parts, could pretend a greater interest in them than a stranger, for they, through a natural affection to my Lord as their own kinsman, would sooner follow him, and under his conduct sacrifice their lives for his Majesty's service, than anybody else, well knowing that by deserting my Lord they deserted themselves."—*The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, by the Duchess of Newcastle. Ed. 1886, p. 156.

² "A Catalogue of Lords, Knights, and Gentlemen of the Catholic faith that were slain in the late war (the Civil Wars)," published in 1686.

³ "My Lord first marched to Rotherham, and finding that the enemy had placed a garrison of soldiers in that town, and fortified it, he threw up his army in the morning against the town, and summoned it; but they refusing to yield, my Lord fell to work with his cannon and musket, and within a short time took it by

branch of the Denton family he belonged it is impossible to say. Francis Errington, the eldest son of Lancelot, of East Denton, according to John Fenwicke's¹ evidence given in 1652, "died unmarried and without issue about eight years ago, being only about seventeen years old," but it seems unlikely that a youth of this age would occupy the position of captain in the Royal army. During the siege of Newcastle in 1644 by the Scots, Captain George Errington,² with Lieutenant William Robson and Ensign Thomas Swan, defended the Pilgrim Street Gate with conspicuous valour. Hemmed in both

storm, and entered the town that very night; some enemies of note that were found therein were taken prisoners; and as for the common soldiers, which were by the enemy forced from their allegiance, he showed such clemency to them, that very many willingly took up arms for his Majesty's service, and proved very faithful and loyal subjects and good soldiers."—*Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, p. 41.

¹ This John Fenwick was probably the son of Anthony Fenwick of Fenham, who was baptised at St. Nicholas', January 28th, 1598, his sureties being Mr. Mark Errington, John Fenwick, and Mrs. Ann Ogle. (St. Nicholas' Registers.)

² George Errington was the second son of Mark Errington, of West Denton, born between the years 1612-15. His father having on January the 16th, 1636, purchased the estate called Darras Hall from Sir Francis Brandling of Alnwick Abbey, to whom Lancelot Ogle—stated to be the owner of it in 1628—had presumably mortgaged it for £1230, made it over to him on the 11th of June 1643. Before the Erringtons were put into possession of the property it was sequestered—about the year 1645—for the delinquency of Thomas Ogle, and the question of title appears to have arisen. The sequestration was discharged with arrears from 13th April 1652, and in 1663 we find George Errington returned as the owner of Darras Hall, his rental for it being given as £100. A few years before this date, 2nd June 1646, he had compounded for his own delinquency in serving under the Earl of Newcastle as captain of a train-band by a fine of £45. (See "Catalogue of the Lords, Knights, and Gentlemen that have compounded for their Estates," by Sir William Dugdale, 1655.)

A tombstone in the nave of St. Nicholas' marks his last resting-place.

"The Buriall Place of George Errington, Marchant Aduenturer, and Jane, his Wife, and their Children. He depted this life the 5th of May 1674. Jane, his

before and behind they would not for long even parley with the Scots, but maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds. At last they surrendered to Lieutenant-Colonel Sinclair, who, we are told, on account of their brave resistance, "loved and honoured them, and kept his agreement with them so well that not one was robbed of his clothes or money."¹

Ralph Errington, possibly belonging to the Denton family, and the same Ralph Errington who in 1638 resigned the post of muster-master for the training up of youth and the train-bands in Newcastle, was Quarter-Master-General of the Earl of Newcastle's army,² and would no doubt be present at the battle of Marston Moor in

Daughter, depted February the 20th day, 1659. Alsoe Isabell, his Daughter, the 20th of December 1663."

The slab bears his coat-of-arms, which is thus given by Richardson :—

"Two bars, in chief three escallop shells . . . a crescent for difference for Errington of Denton in Northumberland, impaling . . . three chevrons interlaced in the base of the escutcheon . . . on a chief . . . three annulets . . . for Ewbank. Crest—an unicorn's head erased."—*A Collection of Armorial Bearings, Inscriptions, etc., in the Church of St. Nicholas, Newcastle*, vol. i. p. 45.

His daughter Catherine is commemorated on a tombstone at Cramlington, the inscription on which is as follows :—

"Here lies the Body of Michael Dunford, of East Cramlington, who departed this Life March 18th, 1726, aged 70 years. Likewise the Body of Catherine Errington, of West Denton. She was one of the Heiresses of George Errington, of Benwell, Esq., by Jane, Daughter and sole Heiress of George Babington, of Newcastle, Esq. [Buried 15th July 1657. All Saints' Register], Brother to Sr Heny Babington of Kiddington, in Oxfordshire, and of Heaton in this County. She made her niece, Anne Dunford, Relict of Thomas Dunford, of East Cramlington, her Heir, who in Gratitude to her Memory caused this Inscription to be done."—Mackenzie's *History of Northumberland*, vol. ii. p. 411.

¹ *The Siege and Storming of Newcastle on October 19th, 1644* (Allan, 1889), p. 31.

² *Life of William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle*, p. 165.

July 1644, which, but for Prince Rupert's rashness, might have resulted in a victory for the king.

After the crushing defeats of Naseby and Philiphaugh in 1645, the Royalists were obliged to give up the struggle, and harsh was the treatment they received from the hands of the ungenerous Parliamentarians.

Their estates were sequestered, and they themselves, especially if papists, subjected to humiliating regulations.

Lancelot and Mark Errington both suffered for their loyal adhesion to the king. They were among the "delinquents who were censured before the month of September 1645," and this is what was certified concerning them :—

"Lancelot Errington, of East Denton, a Papist and Delinq^t, he was a Lieut.-Collonel, and was taken prisoner in Newcastle, his Estate per ann £500.

"Mark Errington, of West Denton, a Committee man, his hand at Severall Warrants, his Three sonnes in arms against the parliam^t, himself an active man against the Parliam^t, thought to be worth in money £2000, his estate p ann £100."¹

Lancelot Errington died in September 1649, leaving two sons, Mark,² seventeen years of age, and Lancelot, a mere child.

On the 12th of February 1650, Margaret Errington, "y^e distressed widdow of Lancelott Errington, late of Denton, dec^d," addressed a petition to the Commissioners, showing that her husband's estate lying still under sequestration, she and her children—"her poore children being

¹ "A true copy of what is certified concerning the said Lancelot and Mark Errington in the duplicate from the late Committee for Sequestrations in the county of Northumberland of all such delinquents who were censured before the month of September 1645."—G. 139, fo. 613.

² Mark Errington, of Ponteland, in his will dated 22nd October 1637, bequeathed "to my nephew, Lancelot Errington, a 20s. piece, and to his son, Marke Errington, *whom I christened*, a cow and a calf."

very younge, and herselfe a sickly woman"—were left destitute, and she prays them to allow her a fifth part of the estate, also "y^e dwelling-house" and a fifth part in kind, "y^t she may therewth make some better provisions of livelyhood for her children, not being able to supporte them with the bare rent."¹ Her request was granted.

Charles Errington, son of Mark Errington of West Denton, also petitions on November 7th, 1651, that an annuity of £8 which on the 7th of February 1631 had been granted by Lancelot Errington out of the Denton estate to his father, and by the latter on the 10th of May 1639 to the petitioner as a younger son, be paid to him.² This request the county committee refuse to allow without an order from the committee for compounding.

It is further represented to the Commissioners that Laneelot enjoyed possession of the estate for life only, and that on his death it of right belonged to his eldest son, Mark, by virtue of a settlement made by Mark's grandfather, Anthony, on the 20th of April 1630. Laneelot Errington's name, however, was in the second act for sale, 4th of August 1652. Part of his estate—the East and West farms in Elswick—was sold to John Bowes, gentleman; another part, a coalmine and four farms in Benwell, to Gilbert Crouch, and John Clarke of Denton obtained a five years' lease of East Denton colliery at a rent of £160, and Cuthbert Blaigburne a five years' lease of the lands in North Seaton. Mark Errington was at this time a youth of about twenty years of age, and through the representations of his guardian, Gilbert Mabbott, of Westminster, his claim to the lands and colliery in Denton and Lemington, etc., was on the 12th of September 1653 allowed, and the sequestration of the premises discharged from the date of petition.³

¹ Interregnum Papers, vol. G. 84, fo. 988.

² *Ibid.*, fo. 1011.

³ *Ibid.*, fo. 1052, 1053; G. 139, fo. 605.

Mark Errington, of West Denton, compounded for his estates by a fine of £67, 15s.,¹ and Gilbert Errington by a fine of £66, 13s. 4d.

In a list of rentals compiled in 1663 we find Mark Errington, of East Denton, entered at £160, and Gilbert Errington, of West Denton, at £100. An assessment of the one-fourth part of the cost of a horse was levied on the former, and one-fifth part on the latter.²

In 1662-63 was levied the obnoxious Hearth Tax, a tax of 2s. on every fire-hearth and stove. Mark Errington in 1665-66 [16-17 Charles II.] paid on eight hearths. The effect of the tax probably was to cause him to discontinue the use of three hearths, for in 1667 [18 Charles II.] he paid on five, Gilbert Errington, of West Denton, also paying on the same number.³ A John Fenwick of either East or West Denton also paid on five hearths.

Mark Errington, of East Denton, died in 1672, and was buried on the 5th of April of that year at Newburn.⁴ The Newburn registers record the rapid disappearance of his family; his daughter was buried on the 2nd of May 1672, his son Thomas on the 7th of May 1673, and his son Lancelot [baptised 7th May 1664] on the 30th of May 1674.⁴ A Mark Errington—presumably his son—occurs in a list of the freeholders who, in 1675 (26 Charles II.), paid the hearth-tax at East and West Denton.

Mr. Gilbert Errington, 5.

Mr. Mark Errington, 16.

William Errington, 4.⁵

¹ Interregnum Papers, vol. G. 250.

² Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, Part iii., vol. i. p. 323.

³ Exchequer Lay Subsidy $1\frac{5}{8}$ and $1\frac{5}{8}$, Northumberland.

⁴ Newburn Registers. Richard Blome's list of the nobility and gentry of Northumberland in his *Britannia*, which was published in 1673, must have been compiled previous to 1672, as it contains the name of "Mark Errington, of East Denton, Esq."

⁵ Lay Subsidy $1\frac{5}{8}$, Northumberland.



OLD DINING HALL.

In 1675 died at Denton, whither he had retired, Francis Radclyffe, brother of Sir Edward Radclyffe of Dilston. Among the various bequests which he made in his will [dated 3rd Oct. 26 Car. II.] was a sum of £40 to his "niece, Mrs. Anne Errington, of East Denton, widdow," and an annuity of £40 to his "well-beloved servant and friend, William Porter, of East Denton, Gent."¹

Madam Errington's name is dragged into a rather singular case, which was tried before Ralph Jenison at Newcastle on the 21st of May 1679. A person of the name of Elizabeth Abbott, spinster, a Roman Catholic, had gone to Mr. Riddell's house at Fenham² in the hope of finding a priest to comfort her, as she was troubled in conscience, and, thinking that they slighted her, she determined to take a singular revenge. This is what she told Gilbert Errington, of Ponteland, on the 20th of May: "that she was resolved to goe to Fenham, heareing Mr. Ridle was att home, and that if he denyed hir request, as his lady had formerly done, she would doe the strangest act that ever was done, for she would sett the towne of Newcastle on Fire; and that she had viewed the place where she resolved to doe it, for she would gett pitch and tarr, and sett fire in the Maior's³ shopp, or in some other shopp where there was lint and tow, and would stand by it that she might be taken, and would

¹ *Archæologia Æliana*, new series, vol. i. p. 220. The annuity mentioned above had been granted to Sir Francis Radclyffe by his father-in-law, Sir Thomas Riddell, of Gateshead, in consideration of £500 which, in 1637, Sir Francis had lent to him, that sum being part of his wife's, Margaret Riddell's, marriage portion out of St. Edmond's Lands.

² Thomas Riddell, of Fenham, Esq. He was son of the gallant Royalist colonel and Governor of Tynemouth Castle, Sir Thomas Riddell, who died an exile at Antwerp in 1652, and was buried in the Church of St. Jacques there. The "lady" of this Thomas Riddell was Mary, eldest daughter of Edward Grey, of Bitchfield.

³ George Morton was Mayor in 1679.

own herself to have done it, and would swear before any authority that Mr. Riddle and his lady, and Mrs. Errington, of Denton, and some others, were the cause thereof." Mr. Errington seems to have thought that "she was possessed with an evil spirritt." The accused was acquitted.¹

In March 1683, Lancelot Errington (brother, no doubt, of Mark, who died in 1672) was committed to gaol for refusing the oaths of allegiance. In the following July, William Errington, another member of the Denton family, was in gaol for the same cause.² We meet with these Erringtons again the following year, when, by a deed dated March 10th, 1684, between Will. Riddell, of Gateshead, Esq., Lancelot Errington, of East Denton, Esq., and Anne Errington, widow, of the same place, of the one part, and William Errington and Anthony Errington, of East Denton, Gents., of the other part, an annuity of £60 out of East Denton is granted to Anthony Errington, of Ponteland, Gent.³

On the 23rd of February 1689, the Newburn Registers record the burial of Mr. Lancelot Errington, of East Denton. In his will, dated 14th December 1688, he gives his place of residence as "West Denton." He thereby bequeathed to his wife, Hester, all his estate whatever, both real and personal, leaving her his sole executrix.⁴

The West Denton branch of the Errington family was not much longer rooted in the place than the East Denton one.

We have seen that Gilbert Errington was seated at West Denton

¹ Depositions from York Castle, pp. 237, 238, Surt. Soc., vol. 40.

² Depositions from York Castle, pp. 238, 239, Surt. Soc., vol. 40. We find, a William Errington and Lance Errington appointed ensigns, June 13th, 1667, in "a regiment of foot raised or to be raised."—Calendar of State Papers (Domestic), Charles II., 1667, p. 180.

³ 1723. Anthony Errington, of Pont Island, was buried July 1.—Newburn Registers.

⁴ Will at Durham.

in 1663. The Newburn Registers, which begin in 1659, give us the following names of his children baptised there:—Charles, November 13th, 1660 [he was buried six days later]; Christopher, November 12th, 1663; Anne, March 21st, 1666; Isabell, July 21st, 1668; Margaret, October 10th, 1670; Nicholas, 20th May 1684. A Marke Errington [de West Denton] was one of the Grand Jury at the Sessions held at Morpeth on the 18th of April of this year, who, in their presentments, proposed “that 12d. every Sabbath day may be duely levied upon all Dissenters from the Church of England according to the Statute in that case provided, and that noe Minister or Churchwardens may be defective on their part in pursuance of the said statute; that noe person whatsoever within this county may be Licensed to keepe a publicke ale House or victualling House, but such as repaire to Church to hear Divine Service and receive the Sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England; that noe man whatsoever within this county may be in publicke commission, office, or employment, but such onely who are well or generally reputed Loyall to his majesty, his heires and Liniall successors, and are conformable to this present Government as is now established by Law, and who, in pursuance of a presentment made at the last sessions at Morpeth, humbly desire that all dissenters may be prosecuted and disarmed, being dangerous to the publicke peace and Government of this kingdom.”

On the 23rd of August 1686, Frances Errington, of West Denton, and on the 28th of November 1686, Gilbert Errington, of West Denton, were buried in woollen, in accordance with the Acts of Parliament passed in 1666 and 1678 for the encouragement of the woollen manufactures.

“Mrs. Isabell Errington” [no doubt the daughter of Gilbert Errington, baptised July 21st, 1668] was buried on March 21st, 1691, and “Madam Errington, late wife of Marke Errington, of West Denton,” on August 16th, 1694. And so before the close of

the seventeenth century the Erringtons disappear from West Denton. The Erringtons of Ponteland—an offshoot, as already stated, of the Denton family—retained their connection with that place till 1774, though for many years they bore the name of Stapleton, a Nicholas Errington in the eighteenth century having assumed his mother's name.

Like their Denton kinsfolk, they were ardent Royalists and papists. At the outbreak of the Civil Wars, Nicholas Errington, of Ponteland, “departed from his house at Pont Eland and went into the Garrison at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and did there adhere to the King's forces.”¹ He afterwards submitted to the Parliament and was “conformable to all their orders in October 1645,” and on the 20th of April 1647 took the National Covenant, which was administered to him by “William Barton, Minister of John Zecharies, London.”² His name, however, was inserted in the Act for the sale of delinquents' estates in 1652, and for a time he did not know “which way to turn for food for his wife and six children.”³ Sir Arthur Haselrigg purchased his life-interest, and would only consent to “take off his heavy hand from the estate” upon condition that Nicholas Errington and his son Mark would convey to him absolutely that portion of their inheritance lying in Meersfen, which condition, “out of fear of Sir Arthur's power, and on payment of £600,” was accepted.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century and during the early years of the eighteenth, the position of the Erringtons of the district was not an enviable one; while rumours of Jacobite plots were flying about the country the adherents of the Stuart family and professors of the ancient faith were regarded with suspicion,

¹ Interregnum Papers, G. 202, fo. 558.

² *Ibid.*, fo. 561.

³ *Historical MSS. Commission*, 7th Report, Appendix, p. 99.



DRAWING-ROOM.

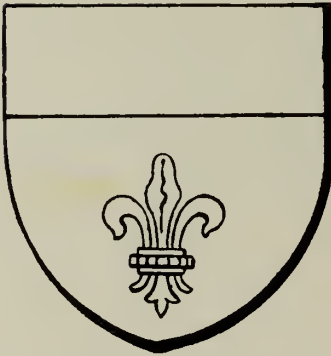
stringent regulations being enforced against them. We find several of their names in lists of Northumbrian recusants drawn up in 1674 and 1683. In the midsummer sessions of 1696 Gilbert Errington, of Ponteland, and Anthony Errington, of Benwell, yeomen, catholics and non-jurors, entered into recognisances of £40 each. In 1701 and 1702 warrants were issued against Benedict Errington, Sen., Benedict Errington, Jun., Gilbert, Nicholas, Mark, and John Errington, all belonging, with perhaps the exception of the last one, to the Ponteland family. Among the papists cited in 1706 were Anthony Errington, of Fenham, Ann Errington, widow, of Fenham, and Nicholas Errington, of Ponteland, and in 1716, Edward Errington, of Kenton, and Anthony Errington, of Ponteland.

There were, no doubt, among the numerous Erringtons who were to be found in Newcastle at this time descendants of the East and West Denton and Ponteland families, but they do not seem to have wielded much of the influence formerly possessed by the lords territorial of Denton.

THE ROGERS'.

Arms—Argent, in base a fleur-de-lis sa. a chief gules.

Crest—A fleur-de-lis.



To the Erringtons succeed the Rogers' as owners of Denton Hall in the latter part of the seventeenth or early part of the eighteenth century. The family came from Hertfordshire and Leicestershire. A John Rogers, son of George Rogers, of Blaby,¹ in the county of Leicestershire, was a merchant in Newcastle in the time of Charles I.²

In 1665 he was one of the coalowners on Tyneside who signed an agreement undertaking not to work his collieries from May 1st to September 29th,³ large quantities of coal having accumulated at the pits and staiths, which they were anxious to get rid of. Limiting the output was thus found necessary before the nineteenth century, at a time too when the water was

¹ A Mr. Rogers, of Blaby, occurs in a list of those whose estates had been sequestrated, dated 21st April 1648.

² To John Rogers, Dorothy Errington, of Newcastle, second daughter of John Errington, late of Beaufront, bequeathed in 1643 "the sum of twenty shillings of lawful English money."—Will at Durham.

³ "Archæology of the Coal Trade," *Proc. of Arch. Inst., Newcastle*, 1852, p. 216, Appendix.

drawn out of the pits by gins or windmills, and the coal was brought to the surface in corves and conveyed to the keels in wains.

In William Dugdale's heraldic visitation of 1666, John Rogers was stated to be then married to Margaret, daughter of Henry Cock, and to have three children—John, at this time ten years of age, Sarah, and Mary.¹ "Captain John Rogers" he is styled at a later date; no doubt the convivial merchant referred to by Richard Forster, of Newcastle, in his letters of September 28th and October 8th, 1667, to James Hicks, of London:—

"I shall not give you nore my selfe: anay more trobell; about that affare; but shall holay refare my selfe to what you shall askt in my behalfe, ffor oure ffrend; that did remēber his nobell and most worthay Collonell; and leuetenant; Collonell Rogers; with Mr. George Erennton; ar now drincking; youre and his helth; and Indead I nevere meat my kynd; and worthy ffrend; Mr. Rogers but we doe it, he beinge one that hath a gret respekt ffor you."²

"I met my good ffrend Mr. Rogers, yesterday vpon the exchange and we went of to remēber you; when I meat Maiore Tolhurst³ I shall doe the leyke and

¹ Sarah afterwards married the Honourable Charles Montagu, fifth son of the Earl of Sandwich, and was the mother of the Honourable Edward Montagu, one of the owners of Denton Hall. Mary married Sir William Creagh, and had two daughters, one of whom became the wife of Anthony Isaacson of Newcastle, the other, wife of Dominick Archdeacon of Cork.

² *State Papers, Domestic*, Charles II., vol. 218, No. 23.

³ Major Jeremiah Tolhurst was, in 1653, one of the lessees of Winlaton colliery, which had been sequestrated for the delinquency of Sir John Mennes, and the owner of several salt-works on the Tyne. On September 24th, 1655, he was made a free burgess of Newcastle on petition "for that by reason of his not being free, he hath been forst to sell his coals to free oastmen to his great losse, and for that he may be useful to the corporation abroad." He signed a memorial, dated February 24th, 1688, on behalf of the oastmen and coal-traders of Newcastle and the North of England to the commissioners for trade between England and Scotland, showing the great inequality in the export duties charged on the two nations for coal, the English paying eight shillings, the Scotch only twenty pence, and he evidently took a leading position among the coalowners of the North.

my Cosen Erenhton; and shall thancke him, but in the laet tymes I hadd some expereance, of his pretended kyndnis; but I fforget all I thancke God as I have Mr. Swan's Iniureys, and prackteyseys which he vsed to remove me."¹

He was Sheriff of Newcastle in 1669, Thomas Davison being Mayor.² He died in 1671, and was buried at St. Nicholas' on June 1st.³ His widow became the second wife of Sir William Blackett,⁴ the wealthy Newcastle merchant, who a short time before the celebration of this marriage had acquired the famous mansion afterwards known as "Anderson Place."

The second John Rogers was associated with Henry Hudson, John Carr, and Nathaniel Blakiston in the working of a number of coal-mines. In 1682 they granted to T. More for a term of twenty-six years a lease of Newburn, Newburn Hall, Dewley, Butterlaw, Walbottle, Prudhoe, and Hedley collieries. John Rogers married on the 25th of September 1684, at Lanchester, Elizabeth, daughter of Benjamin Ellison, merchant of Newcastle, with whom he acquired the farmhold of Hindley in the parish of Bywell St. Andrew's and Bywell St. Peter's. In 1688 and 1689 he acquired property at Monkseaton, being then engaged, with the other partners, in the working of the coal-mines at Whitley and Monkseaton. We meet with his name in the register of baptisms of St. Nicholas' for August 15th, 1689, he being one of the sureties for Dorothy, daughter of John Ord,⁵ an attorney of Newcastle, who a few years later, in 1695, purchased Fenham from Thomas Riddell.

In 1693-94 he was High Sheriff of Northumberland. About 1696

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, Charles II., vol. 219, No. 95.

² Brand's *Newcastle*, vol. ii. p. 512.

³ St. Nicholas' Registers—1671, June 1st, Mr. John Rogers, oastman.

⁴ "Obsequies of Certain of the Family of Blackett of Newcastle," p. 10, Richardson's *Reprints*, vol. i.

⁵ St. Nicholas' Registers.



T. Eyre Macklin.
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DENTON HALL FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

certain fee-farm rents in Northumberland, £2, 8s. 4d. for the house and barn in Denton, and £30 for the Denton coal-mines, were granted to the Merchant Venturers of Bristol for the maintenance of twenty-four poor people in almshouses on St. Michael's Hill there, founded and endowed by Edward Colston of philanthropic fame, and placed in the care of this incorporated company.

In the election of 1705, "John Rogers, of Row Chester" (Rutchester, an estate he had purchased from Thomas Riddell, Esq.), voted for the two Whig candidates and old members, Sir John Delaval, Bart., and Sir Francis Blake, Knt., the other two candidates being Thomas Forster, Esq. (afterwards notorious as the general of the Jacobite forces in 1715), and Bartram Stote, Esq. Forster and Delaval were successful. He was one of the original subscribers to All Saints' Schools, Newcastle. He died in November 1709, and on the 11th of that month was buried at St. Nicholas'.¹

The estate into which his son, the third John Rogers, entered, was a very considerable one, the extent of which may be gathered from his will, dated September 20th, 1711. He therein devised to his mother, Elizabeth Rogers, lands, etc., in Bramston, Lamesley, Ravensworth, Harburn, Parkhead, and Jarrow, in the county of Durham, lands at Hindley in the parish of Bywell, houses in Newcastle, his estate at Denton, Sugley, Throckley, Newbiggin, Scotchwood, Puncheon's Rigg, and North Shields; collieries and salt-pans at Cullercoats, Monkseaton, Whitley, and Hartley; lands and staiths at Molls Meadows, the houses in Newcastle called My Lady Blackett's, and Poyd's house in the Close for the term of her life. He also gave to Ann Delaval, daughter of Sir John Delaval (third and last baronet), all his goods, lands, etc., at North Seaton,² on her marriage, and also the lands,

¹ St. Nicholas' Registers.

² Purchased by the second John Rogers from Sir Edward Longueville, Bart., and John Blunt, gent.

etc., at Rudchester, to enter on after the decease of his mother.

The Ann Delaval mentioned in this will two years later became his wife. By a deed dated October 16th and 17th, 1713, between Sir John Delaval, Bart.,¹ and John Rogers, the manor of Hartley was subjected to a payment of £8000 within the year of Sir John's decease (which took place 4th June 1729).

On November 5th, 1713, Elizabeth Rogers, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and John Rogers, her son and heir, convey to certain trustees, to wit, Grey Neville, of Billingbere, county Bucks, and Edward Delaval, of Dissington, the manor of Rouchester, the farmholds of Hindley and Low Sugley, land called Lemmington Green, lands in West Denton (adjoining lands of the Duke and Duchess of Somerset), in the possession of John Blackett, Esq.; lands at North Seaton, Scotchwood, Benwell, and Jarrow; lands called Whitefield, in the possession of Robert Awde and Richard Batty, lands called South Parke, Lamb's Foulds, Coathouse Awards, etc., etc.

John Rogers was a Justice of the Peace for Northumberland in 1714, then said to be of "West Denton." In 1715-16 he was Sheriff of Northumberland, at this time of "East Denton."² On October 6th, 1715, the Northumbrian Jacobites assembled at Greenrigg, near Ridsdale, and so inaugurated the disastrous rising in which so many of them lost their lives and estates. The announcement that they intended marching on Newcastle would no doubt cause many of the inhabitants of that town to prepare for the future disposition of

¹ According to Spearman, it was to provide his daughter with a dowry of £10,000 upon her marriage with John Rogers that Sir John sold the reversion of his patrimonial estate to Admiral George Delaval, but it was not until March 1717 that the Seaton Delaval estate came into the admiral's possession, and from two letters of his, dated 23rd January and 18th of February in that year, it would seem that the matter was only then under consideration.

² Brand's *History of Newcastle*, vol. ii. p. 512.



SYCAMORE TREES AT DENTON HALL.

their property, seeing that in a time of civil war life was precarious. John Rogers, for one, on October 10th, 1715, added a codicil to his will, devising his property, after the death of his mother, to his wife for the term of her life, and after her death, to the heirs of her body lawfully begotten by any second husband, except such second husband should be Edward Delaval, of Dissington, Esq., or his son. In case of failure of issue, the property was to go to his cousins Frances Creagh, Sarah Creagh, Margaret Isaacson, and his aunt Montagu's four children, etc.

A scrap of information relating to the 1715 rising is preserved in the Corporation Accounts under date June 28th, 1716—

"John Rogers ordered that 4 guineas be given him in satisfaction of damage done to the Carling Croft in the late Rebellion by Freemen, putting their cows thereinto when the Gates were shut."¹

There is a story told by Spearman² that Mrs. Rogers died within the year, as was said, from poison given her by Sir John Delaval's mistress, Mrs. Poole,³ and that Mr. Rogers became deranged. The statement as to Mrs. Rogers dying within the year is certainly incorrect. What foundation of fact, if any, there may be in the story as to the manner of her death it is impossible to say. From a letter addressed by James Mewburn to Admiral George Delaval on the 16th of December 1720, one would not gather that at that time there was any bad feeling between

¹ "Annals and Historical Events, Newcastle," vol. ii. (MSS. in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne).

² *Newcastle Magazine*, March 1824.

³ "My humble service to Sir John's playfellow, Mrs. Pool," writes Admiral George Delaval to Edward Delaval, 23rd January 1717, *Delaval Papers*, Part iii. p. 119.

Mrs. Poole and Mrs. Rogers.¹ Possibly the influence which Mrs. Poole gained over Sir John may not have been pleasing to his daughter. We know that after his death the Delaval family had some trouble with Mrs. Poole in regard to the late baronet's estate.² Some colour is perhaps given to the story from the fact that it was while staying at Seaton Lodge, in January 1723, that Mrs. Rogers died.³

It is not improbable that Mr. Rogers went distracted shortly after his marriage. Mrs. Montagu, writing to Miss Carter in 1758, states that he "had been mad above forty years;"⁴ but this attack of the disease from which he suffered in the latter years of his life must only have been temporary, for we find him capable of joining with Sir John Delaval, in 1717, in transferring some property at Horton

¹ "Sr John Dellavall and all his Family is altogether at the Lodge, and Madam Rogers, Sir John's Daughter, is bearing them company, and Mr. Rogers is often there too, and Madam Rogers is to stay till Mr. Poole's Birthday, as I am told."—Letter communicated to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* of November 15th, 1890, by Cuthbert B. Traslaw, Cornhill (Mr. Walter B. Thomas).

² "She was executrix of his will, dated 30th September 1726, and at his death June 4th, 1729, took possession of the Lodge and the whole of his effects, including all his papers. There was some litigation between Edward Delaval and his son, F. B. Delaval, and Mrs. Poole about these papers, and certain claims she had upon Seaton and Hartley, the result of which was that on 1st June 1730 she gave up Seaton Lodge and 'writings touching the real estate,' and renounced her claim to certain leases in Hartley and Seaton and annuities of £100 and £80, in consideration of the Delavals allowing her an annuity of £80 for life."—Communicated by Mr. Walter B. Thomas.

³ "172²/₃, Madam Anne Rogers, wife to the W^{pp}full John Rogers, Esq., of Newcastle, being at the Rt. Honorable Sr. John Delavall's att Lodge, departed this life on Thursday, the 3rd of January, and was buried in the Chappell of Seaton Delavall in her father's sepuchre the 11th of the sd month, January 11th, aged 34 years."—Earsdon Registers.

⁴ *Mrs. Montagu's Letters*, vol. iv. p. 74.

to Admiral George Delaval;¹ of discharging his duties as a Justice of the Peace in 1718;² of recording his vote in 1722 as a freeholder of East Denton for Ralph Jenison, the unsuccessful candidate in the election for the county;³ of filling the post of a Deputy-Lieutenant, to which he had been appointed about 13th August 1723 by the Earl of Scarborough, Lord-Lieutenant of Northumberland and Newcastle; and of attending the funeral of Sir William Blackett, third of the name, who had died on the 25th of September of that year.⁴

The mother of Mr. Rogers died in April 1733, and was buried at St. Nicholas' on the 19th.⁵ By will dated December 13th, 1733 [2?], she gave the sum of £50 to the poor of St. Nicholas' parish, the interest of which was to be paid annually on the day of her death for ever;⁵ £50 also to St. Nicholas' Charity School⁶ (the money vested in Sir Thomas Clavering, Bart., and her husband's sister, Mrs. Montagu),

¹ "As to Horton, I count it mine. I have paid for it. All the matter is how I shall have possession with most safety and least trouble, and sure it is evident the best is Mr. Rogers is signing; so pray see what Sir John says to me in his last letter of the cursing there is to prevail with Mr. Rogers to join."—Letter, dated London, 23rd January 1717, from G. Delaval to Edward Delaval, Esq., at Newcastle-on-Tyne, *The Delaval Papers*, Part iii. p. 119.

² Morpeth Sessions Papers.

³ Poll-Book for 1722, p. 26. In this Poll-Book John Rogers's place of residence is given as Newcastle. A Joseph Weatherburn, of East Denton, records his vote for the other candidate, William Wrightson, as a freeholder of Westgate (p. 84). He also attended Sir Wm. Blackett's funeral. It would almost seem, by his place of residence being given as East Denton, as if he were occupying the hall. In 1718 he occupied West Denton Hall, for, according to the Morpeth Sessions Papers, a mastiff or bull-dog belonging to him on the 11th of June in that year seized and mangled a poor half-witted woman from Benwell.

⁴ "Obsequies of Certain of the Family of Blackett of Newcastle," p. 10, Richardson's *Reprints*, vol. i.

⁵ Brand's *History of Newcastle*, vol. i. p. 273.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 275.

£10 to the Charity of the Sons of the Clergy;¹ also £50 more for an additional clause, and £100 rent charges to the poor of All Saints' parish (vested in the Rev. Nathaniel Ellison).

John Rogers was one of the subscribers to Bourne's *History of Newcastle*, published in 1736.

In 1746 his mind was quite deranged, and his friends sued out a commission of lunacy, and his cousin, the Hon. Edward Montagu, was appointed as his committee. The following advertisement appeared in the *Newcastle Journal* of June 7th, 1746:—"All persons indebted to John Rogers, Esq., a lunatick, are desired to meet the Honourable Ed. Montagu, Esq., committee of the said Lunatick's estate, on the 2nd of August next, at Mr. Hill's, at the sign of the White Hart in the Flesh Market, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and then and there to pay their respective debts to the said Mr. Montagu or his agent, otherwise they will be proceeded against according to law."

He lingered on till June the 24th, 1758, and the *Newcastle Intelligencer* of June 28th, 1758, records the end:—

"Saturday, died at his house in Pilgrim Street, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, John Rogers, Esq., a gentleman possessed of a considerable estate, and who had formerly served the office of High Sheriff for the County of Northumberland."

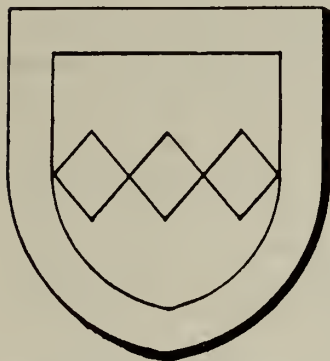
He was buried at St. Nicholas' on July 5th, 1758.

¹ Brand's *History of Newcastle*, vol. i. p. 325.

THE MONTAGUS.

Arms—Argent, three lozenges conjoined in fesse gules within a bordure sable.

Crest—A griffin's head coupé or, beaked sable between two wings endorsed of the last.



ON the death of John Rogers, his property, in accordance with the terms of his will, descended to the following three persons:—The Honourable Edward Montagu, his cousin, William Archdeacon,¹ son of his cousin, Margaret Archdeacon (before her marriage Margaret Creagh), and Anthony Isaacson, son of his cousin, Mary Isaacson (before her marriage Mary Creagh). In the partition, which took place in 1765, Denton fell to Edward Montagu's share, who received two quarters of the estate, and each of the other co-parceners a quarter of it.

Edward Montagu, son of the Honourable Charles Montagu,² and

¹ The other children of John Rogers's sister Sarah, mentioned in his will,—Crewe (baptised at St. Nicholas', January 25th, 1694), John, and Jemima, married to Sir William Meadows,—all died before the testator.

² The Honourable Charles Montagu, fifth son of the first Earl of Sandwich, brother of John Montagu, Dean of Durham, and nephew of Bishop Crewe, married (1) Elizabeth, daughter of Francis Forster, of Belford (at Durham Cathedral, September 3rd, 1685), by whom he had one son, James, and (2) Sarah,

grandson of the first Earl of Sandwich, was born in Newcastle, and baptised at St. Nicholas' Church on November 13th, 1692, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham, John Rogers, Esq., and Lady Crewe being sureties.

Before acquiring the Denton property Mr. Montagu had paid frequent visits to the north of England in connection with his father's



MRS. MONTAGU.

coal-mines. He was here during what is called the "hard winter" of 1739-40. The coal trade being seriously affected by the frost, which from Christmas to February had covered the Tyne with a thick sheet of ice, he, in conjunction with Sir Henry Liddell, Bart., George Bowes, Esq., and the principal coal-fitters of the district, set two hundred men to cut a channel from below Newcastle to their staiths above bridge—a distance of nearly a mile and a half.

The task was accomplished in about a week.¹ He had a considerable reputation as a mathematician, and

daughter of John Rogers, of East Denton, by whom he had issue, Edward, Crewe, John, and Jemima. He was long connected with the north of England, being a large coalowner, and having considerable property in Northumberland and Durham. He was made Vice-Admiral of Durham County by patents from the Bishop, John Cosin. In 1684 he was made Constable of Durham Castle, but afterwards resigned this post to his son James. In March 1686 he was appointed High Sheriff of the county, and held this office till 1709. He was made a spiritual chancellor of the diocese in November 1687, and in December 1690 was appointed Seneschal of Durham for life, and appears to have been so to 1709. He represented the city of Durham in the Parliaments of 1685, 1695, 1700, and 1701. He was one of the "Grand Allies," a coalowners' partnership founded in 1721. He died in 1721.

¹ *Monthly Chronicle*, February 1890, p. 83.

was a patron of William Emerson, the eccentric genius of Hurworth, the merits of whose work on the *Doctrine of Fluxions* he was one of the first to discern.¹

On the 5th of August 1742 he married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Matthew Robinson, Esq., of West Layton, Yorkshire, of Coveney, Cambridgeshire, and of Mount Morris, Kent—a lady of literary tastes, whose beauty and accomplishments made her so interesting a figure in that learned and elegant society of the eighteenth century, of which Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick, and Burke were the most distinguished ornaments.

Denton Hall owes much of its interest to her association with the place, which began in the year 1758. Writing to Miss Carter, the translator of Epictetus, on the 6th of June 1758, she mentions her projected journey to the north:—

“The death of a relation of Mr. Montagu’s in the north, which happened about a fortnight ago, with a large accession of fortune, has brought me the usual accompaniment of riches, a great deal of business, a great deal of hurry, and a great many ceremonious engagements. The ordering funeral ceremonies, putting a large family into mourning, preparing for a journey of 280 miles, and receiving and paying visits on this event, has made me the most busy, miserable creature in the world. . . . In about a week we shall set out for the north, where I am to pass about three months in the delectable conversation of stewards and managers of coal-mines ; and this, by the courtesy of avarice, is called good fortune, and I am congratulated upon it by every one I meet.”²

Mr. and Mrs. Montagu left London on Tuesday, August 1st, travelling by post-chaise, and had reached Darlington by Sunday, August 6th. “On Monday [August 7th], about ten in the evening,” records the *Newcastle Intelligencer* of August 9th, 1758, “arrived in town Edward Montagu, Esq., member of Parliament for Huntingdon, to take possession of part of the late John Rogers, Esq.’s estate.” The

¹ *Monthly Chronicle*, January 1888, p. 30.

² *Letters*, vol. iv. pp. 74, 75.

following week Mrs. Montagu visited several places of interest in the neighbourhood, Hylton Castle, Sunderland, Lumley Castle, and Gibside Hall. It is curious what misconceptions persons in the south of England had of the north. Even so learned a writer as Miss Carter had very hazy notions of "that strange distant region" to which her friend had been transported. "Pray are not you," she asks, writing on August 18th, 1758, "within the arctic circle, and is not the pole star directly over your head? Poor soul! how is it possible that you, who, even in London, used to wish for the warm suns of Italy, should be able to subsist in such a frozen climate!"¹ And in another letter she refers to "the frozen regions of the north." The new owners of Denton Hall at once proceeded to make alterations to it, in accordance with the bad taste of the period. The wide Jacobean fire-places were built up, and a wall was carried across the hall, forming a passage from the west entrance. While the workmen were in the house Mrs. Montagu occupied Carville Hall, near Wallsend.² It was towards the end of October, while staying in the north, that Mrs. Montagu was near losing her life by having *eau de luce* poured into her throat during a fainting fit. Mrs. Montagu returned to London about the middle of November.

In September 1760 the Montagus were in the north again. Mr. Montagu arrived in Newcastle on Wednesday, September 10th,³ and in the latter part of the next week Mrs. Montagu set out from London to join her husband. "As for my journey," she wrote to Miss Anne Pitt, "it was perfect felicity. After the hurry of a public

¹ *Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. i. p. 9.

² "Carville," she writes to Benjamin Stillingfleet on October 22nd, 1758, "is just at the end of the Pict's Wall; it makes part of our enclosures, and we have a Roman altar in our stables."—*Letters*, vol. iv. p. 111.

³ "On Wednesday Edward Montagu, Esq., a member of Parliament for Huntingdon, arrived here on a visit to his relation, Anthony Isaacson, of this town, Esq., with whom he lodges."—*Newcastle Journal*, September 6-13, 1760.

place I found myself in a delightful situation in my post-chaise ; shall never again wonder at Diogenes for choosing to live in a tub, and only wish he had lived in a more enlightened age that he might have added wheels to it.”¹ Evidently a journey of nearly three hundred miles in the eighteenth century was not the long series of discomforts and perils that we are apt to imagine it to have been. She arrived in Newcastle on Thursday night, the 25th of September. The Montagus did not stay at Denton during this visit, but at the house of Mr. Anthony Isaacson, half-cousin to Mr. Montagu, in Newcastle.

A gentleman with whom Mr. Montagu had been long associated as one of the “Grand Allies,” George Bowes, Esq., of Gibside, M.P. for the County of Durham, died a week after his friend’s arrival.² He was buried at Whickham on the 26th of September, on which day Mrs. Montagu wrote to Miss Anne Pitt, alluding to the melancholy event as follows :—

“Mr. Montagu is gone to-day to attend poor Mr. Bowes’ funeral,³ which, according to the custom of this country, is to be magnificent. There is to be more pomp at their funerals than weddings, as if they were of Solomon’s opinion that the end of a feast is better than the beginning of a *fray*. All the nobility and gentry of the counties of Durham and Northumberland are to attend this poor man to the grave, from thence his moral actions only can follow him; and he was temperate, charitable to the poor, and religious, and died with resignation and fortitude.”⁴

She defers a longer letter to her correspondent, having to write to her father on behalf of Sir Thomas Clavering, who was a candidate for the seat left vacant by the death of Mr. Bowes. “I doubt whether we

¹ *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 13th Report, Part iii. p. 141.

² *Newcastle Journal*, September 13-20, 1760.

³ “The pall was supported by the Right Honourable Lord Ravensworth and seven members of the House of Commons. About forty carriages followed the hearse.”—*Newcastle Journal*, September 20-27, 1760.

⁴ *Historical MSS. Commission*, 13th Report, Part iii. p. 140.

shall get the victory," she says, "and I hate to be disappointed, even in an election, but he shall not lose a vote by my indolence; so I will write this moment."¹

Mrs. Montagu had looked forward with some foreboding to what she called her "melancholy abode at Newcastle;"² but in reality her visit seems to have afforded her considerable gratification, and indeed it would have been surprising had it not done so, considering the kindly and hospitable reception she met with, and the various entertainments in which she participated.

"In the first place," she writes to Miss Anne Pitt a few days after her arrival, "I have enjoyed perfect health, on which, in a good climate, perhaps happiness would grow; but happiness is a flower too delicate to blow in the latitude of Newcastle. I have always been able to keep my mind from sinking if I could have books or business. I greatly prefer the first, but even the latter keeps up the vivacity of my spirits. Here I have business in folio; my studies in duodecimo. I am extremely well lodged in a very large convenient house; my cousins are extremely full of attentions and regards; and having done them some little services, they seem to have a good will towards me. They live very well, and with order and neatness. By situation I am eased of all the fatigue of company at dinners, and, except Lord Ravensworth³ and Sir Walter Blackett,⁴ have not had any visitors in

¹ The election took place in December, but before the voting was finished Sir Thomas Clavering retired, and the rival candidate, Robert Shaftoe, Esq., was returned.

² To Lord Lyttelton, September 7th, 1760. (*Letters*, vol. iv. p. 291.)

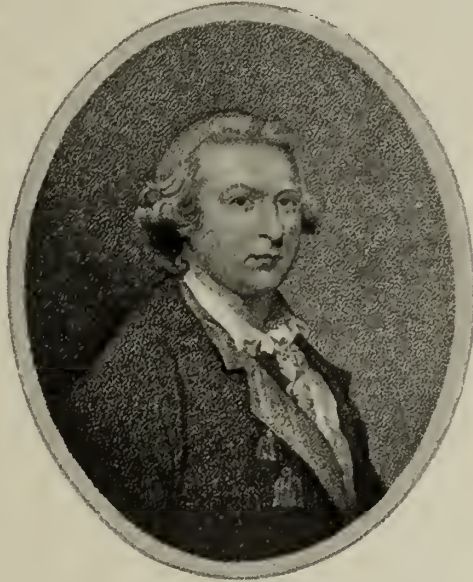
³ The first Baron Ravensworth, of Ravensworth Castle, who previous to the creation of the title, by patent 29th June 1747, was known as Sir Henry Liddell, Bart. He was M.P. for Morpeth, 1734 and 1741. Baptised 1st August 1708, ob. 30th January 1784.

⁴ Sir Walter Calverley Blackett, Bart., of Wallington and Hexham Priory, a munificent and wealthy burgess, styled "The King of Newcastle." He was one of the representatives of Newcastle in Parliament.

a morning. The Northumberland ladies and those of our worshipful corporation only drink tea with me in the afternoon; and as soon as they go away, my kind hostess permits me to withdraw to my apartment.”¹

On Thursday, October 2nd, “Dr. Gregory, a very ingenious Scotch physician,”² came to Newcastle from Edinburgh on a visit to the Montagus, and the Bishop of Ossory³ arrived the next day. Writing to Miss Anne Pitt [? on Tuesday, October 7th], Mrs. Montagu gives an interesting account of her guests and the visits which they made to Lumley Castle and Finchale Abbey:—

“Church kept me till late on Sunday morning, and I had company after church. As soon as I had dined I went with the Bishop of Ossory to see a fine collec-



DR. GREGORY.

¹ *Historical MSS. Commission*, 13th Report, Part iii. p. 141.

² John Gregory, youngest son of James Gregory, Professor of Medicine in King's College, Aberdeen, was born at Aberdeen on the 3rd of June 1724, and married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Forbes, in 1752. He practised and lectured on medicine at Aberdeen till 1764, when he removed to Edinburgh; two years afterwards he was appointed Professor of Medicine at the University there. He died on the 19th of February 1773. He was a friend of Akenside, Hume, Lord Monboddo, Lord Kames, Dr. Blair, and James Beattie, and was the author of *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man, with those of the Animal World*, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, and several medical works.

³ Richard Pococke, D.D., born at Southampton, 1704. In 1737, being then

tion of shells and fossils, and after I returned home was going to take up my pen and write to you when I was prevented by a visit from Sir Walter Blackett. . . . I carried the Bishop and Dr. Gregory yesterday to see Lumley Castle, a noble house very finely situated, and full of old portraits which, from the times, the characters, or dresses, are amusing, besides the pleasure that arises from the art of painting. We went from Lumley Castle to see a very pretty place of Mr. Carr's, near Durham.¹ Its wildness has a charm beyond the reach of art; to describe the whole would take more time than I have at command; but its principal beauty is a rapid river which, running over rocks and large stones, delights the eye and the ear. There is a walk made under the rocky banks where you walk with all the accommodation art can make, and behold beauties which nature only can create. The most potent and wealthy monarch, if he wanted such a murmuring stream to soothe his care,

Precentor of Lismore, he travelled in the East, returning in 1742. He published, in 1743, *A Description of the East, and of some other Countries*, vol. i.—*Observations in Egypt*; and in 1745, under the same title, vol. ii., *Observations in Palestine, in the Holy Land, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, and Candia*. He was promoted in 1756 to the bishopric of Ossory, and in July 1765 translated by the Duke of Northumberland to Meath. He died in September the same year.

"The Bishop," wrote Mrs. Montagu to Miss Anne Pitt, describing his visit, "is the greatest traveller in Europe, and as well acquainted with the banks of the Nile as of the Thames; is an antiquarian and a natural philosopher, admires an old Pyramid, and if a peculiar kind of moss grew upon it, or a spider of an uncommon sort had spun a web on the tomb of the Ptolemies, nay, even on the breast of Cleopatra, it would not escape his notice. It seems to me as if art and nature had sent him into the world to make an inventory of everything that belonged to them. He surveys every object with great accuracy, and describes it with great exactness, which makes his conversation amusing and instructive."—*Historical MSS. Commission*, 13th Report, Part iii. p. 143.

¹ This was Cocken Hall, the seat of Ralph Carr, Esq., who had married on October 17th, 1753, Mary Vane, daughter of Henry, first Earl of Darlington.

such magnificent rocks to shelter him, could not procure them in Middlesex. The ruins of an old abbey on the side opposite to Mr. Carr, makes an object agreeable to the character of the place. The abbey had been once a fine piece of Saxon architecture; but by civil war had been partly demolished; piety had rebuilt its walls, zeal at the Reformation had again destroyed them. . . . The Bishop and my other companion crossed the river to visit the sacred relics of the abbey, but, being assured the boat was crazy, I contented myself with sitting in a cleft of the rock to contemplate it, and passed above half-an-hour very agreeably. My imagination made a drama suitable to the scene, and I followed the monks to matins and vespers, and attended them to the refectory. The Bishop was highly pleased as an antiquarian with the abbey. I had a more vulgar and less learned delight as an ordinary and ignorant spectator, but, from a certain enthusiasm for the *beau* in all objects, I had a tolerable share of pleasure, and went through a day of great exercise without the least fatigue: we did not get back till about eight o'clock."¹

The following morning the visitors left. A few days later she writes to Lord Lyttelton:—

"I am actually an inhabitant of Newcastle, and am taking out my freedom, not out of a gold box, but by entering into all the diversions of the place. I was at a musical entertainment yesterday morning,² at a concert last night,³ at a musical entertainment this

¹ *Historical MSS. Commission*, 13th Report, Part iii. pp. 143, 144.

² The concert in the morning probably took place at Mr. Callendar's, New Ranelagh Garden, adjoining Gallowgate, which had been opened for the season on June 4th, 1769.

³ This was probably the first of the series of subscription concerts which were held in "Mr. Parker's Long-Room, in the Bigg Market," beginning this year on Thursday, the 9th of October, continuing once a fortnight till the March following, under the conductorship of the famous composer and organist, Charles Avison.

morning. I have bespoken a play¹ for to-morrow night, and shall go to a ball on choosing a mayor² on Monday night. The people are very obliging and desirous to amuse me, and I could never understand Master Shallow's dignity of being very proud and very melancholy, and so I endeavour to seem diverted at least."³

We infer from several expressions in her letters that Mrs. Montagu endured rather than enjoyed the society of the "aldermanesses" and other notabilities of Newcastle. As the authoress of three of the *Dialogues of the Dead*, published the previous May, and with other pretensions to literary fame, Mrs. Montagu doubtless felt, as her friend Miss Carter felt on her behalf, that it was "provoking" so superior a person should be "squandered away upon people who would be just as well pleased with anybody else that could dress fashionably, and frequent balls, and plays, and visiting rooms."⁴ It is to be regretted that none of these unlettered, but in all probability shrewd and clear-sighted gentlewomen of Newcastle, took the trouble to put on record their impressions of Mrs. Montagu. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, who "saw her often in the neighbourhood of Newcastle," and speaks strongly of her affectations, tells us that in this town, "where there was no audience for such an actress as she was, her natural character was displayed, which was that of an active

¹ During this week the Edinburgh Comedians were performing at the new theatre in the Bigg Market. They gave a concert of music in two parts, between which they played a comedy called "The Careless Husband," and, in addition, "A Dish of Mr. Foote's Tea," called "The Diversions of the Morning; or, The Player's Looking Glass," with the parody of "To Write, or Not to Write."

² At the election of a mayor, etc., on Monday, October 6th, 1760, the following gentlemen were chosen:—Henry Partis, Esq., Mayor, Edward Collingwood, Esq., Recorder, and John Baker, Esq., Sheriff. "There will be an assembly on Monday next, it being the Guild."—*Newcastle Journal*, October 11th, 1760.

³ *Letters*, vol. iv. p. 302.

⁴ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. i. p. 96.



BENWELL BANK.

manager of her affairs, a crafty chaperon, and a keen pursuer of her interest, not to be outdone by the sharpest coal-dealer on Tyne ; but in this capacity she was not displeasing, for she was not acting a part."¹

Receiving and paying visits, taking part in the diversions of the town, and assisting her husband in furthering Sir Thomas Clavering's candidature, and transacting the business of the Denton collieries, driving out many a day, we may be sure, to Denton Hall, the time sped pleasantly enough, and on October 21st, the town being then "very gay from the races,"² she writes to Lord Lyttelton—"I am afraid I shall not get to London before the 15th of November, though I shiver now at our northern breezes."² The northern breezes seem to have given her cold, for she tells Lord Lyttelton (October 31st), "I complained in my last of a pain in my face, and I grew so ill for want of rest that I sent for our famous Dr. Askew, who has given me a medicine which has done me great service."³

On Saturday, the 1st of November, the new mayor proclaimed King George at the Guildhall, the Flesh Market, and the White Cross in Newgate Street, "amidst the joyful acclamations of several thousands of spectators," one of whom, no doubt, would be Mrs. Montagu. She left Newcastle about the 15th of November.

The Montagus at this time do not seem to have intended using Denton Hall as a residence, for "several farms of land, situate, lying, and being at East Denton, with the mansion-house and land thereto belonging," were advertised in the newspapers to be let and entered upon at May-day 1761.⁴ An advertisement as to "East Denton

¹ *Autobiography of the Rev. Alexander Carlyle*, p. 462.

² *Letters*, vol. iv. p. 312.

³ *Letters*, vol. iv. p. 320. It appears that washing the mouth out several times a day with tar-water was a favourite remedy prescribed at this time for toothache. "It is an infallible cure, depend upon it," says Miss Carter.

⁴ *Newcastle Courant*, July 26th, 1760.

hall and gardens" appears in the *Newcastle Journal*, January 3rd, 1761.

On Friday, October 7th, 1763, Mrs. Montagu again set out on what Miss Carter termed "her hyperborean expedition." She remained in the north till about the middle of December, and was thus a witness of a very memorable storm of wind and rain, that of Thursday, December 1st. The heavy rain that fell during the whole day occasioned the greatest "fresh" in the Tyne which had been known for many years past, the river rising to such a height that many of the shops, cellars, and warehouses on the Close, Sandhill, and Quayside were filled with water. A quantity of timber floated half-way up the Broad Chare, and a sloop lying opposite to the Old Custom House was driven upon the Quay, where she was left high and dry at the fall of the tide. Some "vexatious business" connected with the Denton property called Mrs. Montagu to the north in the autumn of 1764. Miss Carter expresses the hope that she may not have "to pay the tax of a personal visit to this north star every year for life,"¹ but congratulates her friend that the "colliery goes on so successfully." "The bustle and variety of Bath will," she hopes, give her some amusement after her "long sejour in the north."²

By deed dated the 7th of March 1765 the partition of the Rogers estate was agreed to by the three co-parceners, and on the same date one of these, Mr. William Archdeacon, leased to Mr. Montagu, for a term of twenty-one years, "all his sixth part or share of the mines under certain grounds in East Denton and Lemmington, and also his fourth part or share of the mines under the remaining grounds of East Denton." Getting the colliery into his own hands, he began at once to work it with vigour. The same month borings were made at the

¹ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. i. p. 256.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 260.

bottom of Scotswood Dene, on the west side of the bank, and about one hundred yards from Tyne side, and in April, "in an old Staple in Denton Gill—viz., at about forty yards south of Denton Bridge," the result being that a new colliery was won at West Denton during the course of the summer, the coal being esteemed equal in quality to that of Long Benton, which was then worked out. In August the partition referred to was duly effected, though the Montagus apprehended difficulties from Mr. Isaacson.¹

"I hope," wrote Miss Carter to Mrs. Montagu on August 14th, "by Mr. Isaacson's completing his part, your affairs are now entirely settled in the colliery, etc. Are you to go into Northumberland this year?"²

Mrs. Montagu seems to have remained at Sandleford during the summer and autumn, instead of journeying northward. Mr. Montagu, however, spent the greater part of the year on his Denton estate; and indeed his presence was required, both in connection with the opening out of the new colliery, and in connection with a strike among the pitmen of Durham and Northumberland lasting several weeks. The dispute arose in consequence of the masters requiring the pitmen bound at the latter end of August and beginning of September 1764 to serve till November 11th, instead of the 24th and 25th August 1765. The pitmen maintained that the time specified in their bonds was eleven months and fifteen days, and not fourteen months. Several outrages took place during the strike, among which was the setting on fire of a mine of coal, and one of the pits of Pelton Common colliery on September 17th or 18th. The men resumed work on September 30th. Mr. Montagu's action in the matter may be gathered from one of Miss Carter's letters to his wife.

"I am glad to find, my dear friend," she says, "that you are not

¹ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. i. p. 271.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 3.

likely to be any considerable loser by the disturbances in the north ; and I congratulate you very heartily at the pleasure you must feel from Mr. Montagu's justice and humanity in refusing to join in any oppression of a body of people so useful to society."¹

The greater part of the following year (1766) Mrs. Montagu spent at Denton, where she arrived in the last week of May. Attending to the concerns of the coal-mine, driving about the country-side in her post-chaise, enduring the "*ennui* of a race-week," and "the dull



COTTAGES AT DENTON.

engagements of uninteresting society," and occupying herself in acts of charity, she spent the next few weeks. Her comments on her neighbours, as communicated to her friends, can scarcely have been flattering, judging by the following paragraph in one of Miss Carter's letters :—"Are your swinish Northumbrians, who stuff four solid meals and guzzle four quarts of ale in a day, more brutal in their

¹ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. i. p. 276.

pleasures than the set of fine gentlemen who kissed the greasy cook for making a soup to their epicurean taste?"¹ On the 12th of July she had an opportunity of testing the gastronomic capabilities of Northumbrian pitmen, for on that date the winning of the colliery was celebrated at Denton Hall by a great entertainment. "All the workmen, with their wives, walked in procession to the great court before the hall, with colours flying and a band of music; from whence, after a general salute of three huzzas, they proceeded to a field east of the house, where several long tables were placed sufficient to contain all the company, consisting of 377 men and women, the tenants and workmen upon the estate. These tables were each furnished with a large piece of beef, mutton, or veal, to which were added twice as many fruit puddings, the size of which may be guessed at by the quantity of flour used for them and the pies, which was less than two sacks; the rest of the dinner consisted of two sheep of 144 lbs. each, and several hundredweight of beef. One of the sheep was roasted whole, and the other, with the beef, boiled in a large brewing vessel. Abundance of ale, strong beer, and punch was consumed. Dinner being ended, the company again returned to the great court, and being drawn up in a circle, with Mr. Montagu and his lady in the centre, they toasted the royal family, the donors, the coal trade, etc., accompanied with loud huzzas, after which they concluded the evening with country dances and other diversions, to the satisfaction of all present."² On the 1st of August Mrs. Montagu set out from Denton for a month's tour in Scotland, visiting Alnwick Castle on her way. She travelled from Edinburgh to Glasgow, by Loch Lomond to the vale of Glencoe, and thence to Inverary, under the guidance of Dr. Gregory. At Edinburgh she met such celebrities as Dr. Robertson, Dr. Blair, and

¹ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. i. p. 304.

² *Newcastle Journal*, July 12-19, 1766; and *Richardson's Table-Book*, vol. ii. p. 152.

Lord Kames. The impression she created, according to Dr. Carlyle, was not a very favourable one. "She came here," he says, "for a fortnight from her residence near Newcastle, to visit Gregory, who took care to show her off; but she did not take here, for she despised the women and disgusted the men with her affectation. Old Edinburgh was not a climate for the success of impostures. Lord Kames, who was at first caught with her Parnassian coquetry, said at last that he believed she had as much learning as a well-educated college lad here of sixteen."¹ She was for a few days the guest of Lord Kames, at Blair Drummond, which place she left on September 10th. Lord Kames had intended paying a visit shortly afterwards to Denton Hall, "but several circumstances," he explained in a letter dated October 29th, "have made it impracticable." A long and interesting account of this tour is given in a letter addressed to Mrs. Robinson from Denton Castle, December 7th, 1766. In this letter she says, "I am still in the northern regions, but I hope in a fortnight to return to London. We have had a mild season, and this house is remarkably warm, so that I have not suffered from cold. Business has taken up much of my time, and as we had farms to let against next May-day, and I was willing to see the new colliery begin to trade to London before I left the country, I had the prudence to get the better of my taste for society."² Dr. Gregory had come back to Denton with her, and she adds, "I detained his two daughters, who are still with us; they are most amiable children."³

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 462.

² Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, p. 139.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 145. "I went to Newcastle," says the Rev. A. Carlyle in his *Autobiography*, "before the end of April [1765] to bring my wife home, on which or some such occasion we brought with us Dr. Gregory's two daughters, Dolly and Anne, very fine girls, who had been staying with Mrs. Montagu."—*Autobiography*, p. 464. Dorothea, the elder of these sisters, was a frequent visitor at Mrs. Montagu's, and after her father's death in 1773 lived with Mrs. Montagu for ten or eleven



Sir Joshua Reynolds, pinx.]

MRS. MONTAGU.

[*J. R. Smith, sc.*

On Tuesday, December 30th, Mr. and Mrs. Montagu set out from Denton for London.¹

On the 28th of August 1767, Mrs. Montagu arrived again at Denton from London² on her almost annual visit.

The following month she founded a school at Denton for the education of the children of the pitmen employed in the colliery.³ This colliery was evidently very remunerative at this time.

"I am much obliged to you, my dear friend," writes Miss Carter on September 17th, 1767, "for your kind communication of the great advantages which you have so good a prospect of deriving from your colliery. You may depend on my not mentioning any of the particulars. God grant you long life, and health and cheerful spirits, to enjoy this new-found treasure, and (give me leave to add) every assistance to enable you to discharge so important a stewardship."⁴ While in the north this year she visited Alnwick Castle again and Hulne Abbey, the latter giving her much pleasure.⁵

By the end of October, or the first week in November, she was back in London.

Frequent as were Mrs. Montagu's journeys, we do not hear of her having any adventures with the knights of the road who infested every part of the country at this time, though the penalty for highway robbery was in most cases the gallows.

One among the numerous cases of highway robbery recorded in

years. On 14th June 1784 she married the Rev. Archibald Alison, who in 1790 published a well-known *Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste*. She was the mother of William Pulteney Alison, a famous Edinburgh physician and writer on medical subjects, and Sir Archibald Alison, the celebrated historian.

¹ *Newcastle Journal*, January 3rd, 1767.

² *Ibid.*, September 5th, 1767.

³ *Ibid.*, October 17th, 1767.

⁴ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. i. p. 348.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

the papers was committed in 1767 between Newcastle and Denton, the person attacked being Mr. Ralph Allison,¹ agent to Mr. Montagu. He was proceeding towards Denton on Saturday night, December 26th, when he was stopped by footpads near Benwell. One of them presented his pistol and demanded his money, but having just been paying several sums in Newcastle he luckily had no more than eighteenpence in his pockets. This they took, with his watch. He asked for his watch back, as it had his name on it. While parleying about it, they heard the sound of a horse's hoofs approaching and the villains told him to stand by the road, threatening to shoot him if he stirred. Shortly afterwards came past Mr. Murray, clerk to William Gibson,² of Newcastle, whom they robbed of three guineas and a gold seal.³ They then gave back to Mr. Allison his watch and made off. The following Monday night a highwayman on horseback stopped the servant of John Blackett, Esq., of Wylam,

¹ "Friday, died at the house of William Archdeacon, Esq., in Newcastle, aged 39, Mr. Ralph Allinson, viewer of collieries to the Hon. Edward Montagu, Esq., in which station he acted with the most indefatigable care and the strictest integrity . . . his humane behaviour to the men under him gained him their esteem and love."—*Newcastle Journal*, July 21-28, 1770.

² William Gibson, attorney-at-law, Westgate Street (f). Whitehead's *Directory*, 1778.

³ *Newcastle Journal*, January 2nd, 1768.

Two years before this date, on Saturday evening, November 16th, 1765, Mr. Mills, a farmer, of East Denton, returning home from market, was attacked by a highwayman on the turnpike road near Elswick windmill and robbed of one shilling and sixpence, that being all the money he had about him at the time; and three years later, on Saturday evening, October 13th, 1770, a Walbottle blacksmith was stopped on the west turnpike near Benwell by two footpads, knocked off his horse, and cruelly beaten with a bludgeon, and robbed of 9s. A few minutes afterwards the rascals attacked a Newburn man at the same spot, but several people coming up they made off towards Elswick. (See *Newcastle Journal*, November 23rd, 1765, and October 20th, 1770.)



DENTON HALL FROM DENTON BRIDGE.

near the same spot, who however got clear away with a slight wound in his hand from the villain's sword.

During the summer of 1768 Mrs. Montagu was busy writing her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare*, which was



MRS. HESTER CHAPONE.

published the following spring. She did not visit the north in 1769, but in the latter part of June 1770 she set out for Denton, carrying with her into the north her friend, Mrs. Chapone.¹ They travelled

¹ Hester Chapone, one of the accomplished ladies who inaugurated the "Blue-Stocking" gatherings, and an essayist of some note, was born at Twywell, Northamptonshire, on the 27th of October 1727. Her father was Thomas Mulso; her mother, a remarkably beautiful woman, was daughter of Colonel Thomas,

by way of Stratford, and, strange to say, though Mrs. Montagu had so recently published a work on Shakespeare, she did not visit his tomb—"an unclassical omission," wrote Miss Carter, "as is not to be tolerated."¹ Mrs. Montagu was, however, slightly indisposed when she left London, and during her journey, while she was at Hagley, the seat of Lord Lyttelton, and at Denton, her illness increased. For a fortnight or so after her arrival she was not able to attend to her farm, her coal-pits, and her studies, but spent the day sauntering about the garden² at Denton, discussing, no doubt, with her friend among the roses and hollyhocks, the many literary and moral questions which had been left unsettled in the famous "Chinese Room" in Hill Street, or Mrs. Vesey's "enchanted Blue-Room" in Bolton Row.³ To these quiet conversations succeeded "Newcastle business" and "Newcastle dinners." Then Dr. Gregory came from Edinburgh to Denton on a visit to Mrs. Montagu, and persuaded her to go back

known as "handsome Thomas." Miss Mulso early gave promise of literary ability, and soon attracted notice. Johnson admitted four billets of hers in the *Rambler* on 21st April 1750. In July and August 1753 she contributed the "Story of Fidelia" to Hawkesworth's *Adventurer*. She married on the 30th December 1760 an attorney named Chapone, who died 19th September 1761. For the daughter of her brother, John Mulso, a beneficed clergyman at Thornhill, near Wakefield, Mrs. Chapone wrote in 1772 her best known essays, the *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. They were published anonymously in 1773, and dedicated to Mrs. Montagu. A third edition was brought out in 1774. In 1775 she published her *Miscellanies*, comprising "Fidelia" and other fugitive matter, with a few poems, and, in 1777, *A Letter to a New-Married Lady*. She died at Hadley on Christmas Day, 1801, aged 74.

¹ *Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. ii. p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 75.

³ In a letter to Miss Carter, dated Denton, August 19th, 1770, Mrs. Chapone says, "I am grown as bold as a lion with Mrs. Montagu, and fly in her face whenever I have a mind; in short, I enjoy her society with the most perfect *gout*, and find my love for her takes off my fear and awe, though my respect for her character continually increases." (*Mrs. Chapone's Posthumous Works*, vol. i. p. 152.)

with him. As this excursion would enable her to have the benefit of Dr. Gregory's medical skill, and would afford entertainment to her friend, she accepted the invitation. The two ladies had a pleasant journey to Edinburgh, and were agreeably entertained in Dr. Gregory's house, receiving all kinds of attentions from the "literate and polite company of Edinburgh." They visited the seats of Lords Buchan, Kinnoul, and Breadalbane, and Mrs. Montagu was so much impressed by the kindness she met with that she wrote: "I must do the justice to the Scottish nation to say they are the most politely hospitable of any people in the world."¹ "I had," she continues, "innumerable invitations of which I could not avail myself, having made as long a holiday from my business in Northumberland as I could afford."² On her return there—about the end of September—she found a "fermentation among the coal-miners"³ respecting some grievance or other. An incident, probably connected therewith, is alluded to by Miss Carter. "I congratulate you," she says, "most heartily on your being fairly rid of your wild-headed cousin. Your affairs must have been in perpetual *brouillerie* under the management of such a conductor, besides the awkward inconvenience of having your house stormed, and poor Israel starting *en sursault* at three o'clock in the morning."⁴ Miss Gregory, who spent the greater part of her girlhood with Mrs. Montagu, was also at Denton this autumn.

Mrs. Montagu, with her companion, left Denton on the 19th of November. "Mr. Montagu," she writes, "did not leave Denton till almost a week after I came away; and he was stop'd at Durham by waters being out; but I had the pleasure of hearing yesterday that he got safe to Darlington, where he was to pass a few days with a

¹ Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, p. 160.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 160, 161.

³ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. ii. p. 85.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. pp. 89, 90.

famous mathematician [William Emerson, of Hurworth], but I expect him in town the end of this week."¹

Early in October 1771, Mr. and Mrs. Montagu arrived at Denton and found the colliery going on in a prosperous way.² They were back in Hill Street before the middle of November, and thus missed seeing the Great Flood, as it is rightly called, the most prodigious "fresh" ever known in the north of England, which swept away part of the old Tyne bridge, inundated the whole workings of Wylam colliery, and caused over so wide an extent of country unexampled loss of life and destruction of property. It is probably to this disaster that Miss Carter alludes in one of her letters:—

"We have terrible accounts in the newspapers of the damage done at Newcastle. I hope Mr. Montagu is not there, nor much engaged in it, nor any way damaged by it. Indeed, I hope very little of it may be true; probably the coal merchants in London may make an inundation in the coal-mines with the same view as the stock-jobbers kindle a war."³

Writing a month later, on December 22nd, she alludes to one of Mrs. Montagu's agents who had been visiting her:—"I hope your northern business is all happily despatched and honest Edward Browne trotted back to his station under the pole-star, to which his constitution is, I believe, much better adapted than yours, as well as his disposition. For as Edward, with all his merit as a very upright man, has in his composition a due proportion of the bear, he is most admirably well qualified to deal with your untoward gentry there."⁴

During 1772 and 1773 the Montagus were able to transact their

¹ Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, pp. 161, 162.

² *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. ii. p. 119.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. pp. 123, 124. The letter is dated November 2nd, but this is probably an error.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 133.

northern business without the customary journey to Denton. The colliery was being worked with enterprise, and in the latter part of 1773 arrangements were concluded for carrying on mining operations beyond the limits of the Denton estate, William Archdeacon having, on the 3rd of December, granted to Edward Montagu, for a term of twenty-five years, dating from May 1st, 1774, a lease of the Beaumont¹ seam underlying ninety acres of the Benwell grounds—part of the estate of Robert Shaftoe—adjoining the east portion of the Denton lands. The Montagus had, in September 1774, made up their minds not to go north that year,² but a few weeks later had come to a contrary decision, for on November 25th Miss Carter writes to her friend at Denton:—"I long to know how you bear the fatigues of your Northumberland life. I was in hopes you would have escaped it this year, for it grieves me to think that the health and spirits you have been acquiring all the summer, instead of soaring into regions of intellectual delight, should be suffocated in the damps of a coal-mine. Yet one is apt to talk mighty foolishly upon these occasions. For, after all, the true proof of wisdom is doing the thing which ought to be done. And though, to be sure, if you had chosen to have staid behind, you might have appeared a much finer lady and a much finer genius, and you might have sat in your Chinese room and your Athenian room, and might have written more *Dialogues of the Dead*, you are certainly a much more reasonable being, and more laudably engaged in accompanying Mr. Montagu, in assisting him in his business and the entertainment of his north-country neighbours."³

The winter had begun very early this year, a quantity of snow,

¹ Named after Mr. Beaumont, a large coalowner of Newcastle. His eldest son, Robert, died at Denton, February 26th, 1755.

² *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. ii. p. 276.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. pp. 290, 291.

hail, and rain falling for many days in November, the winds blowing very strongly, and the journey must have been a serious undertaking to an old man of eighty-two.

On the 20th of May 1775, Mr. Montagu died at his house in Hill Street, Berkeley Square, in the eighty-third year of his age. He was buried in the chancel of Winchester Cathedral.¹ A man of very retired habits and great amiability, fond of the severer studies, particularly mathematics, he had, save for a few years during which he served seven sessions in Parliament for the town of Huntingdon, kept out of public business. He left Mrs. Montagu all his property, both real and personal, only charging the estate with a legacy of £3000. Walpole, writing to Mason, tells him: "The husband of Mrs. Montagu of Shakespearshire is dead, and has left her an estate of £7000 a year in her own power."²

Large as was the estate bequeathed to her, Mrs. Montagu proved herself quite capable of managing it successfully. Her capacity for business had struck the Rev. Alexander Carlyle when he visited the neighbourhood of Newcastle, and Miss Carter affirmed that her friend could despatch more business in a given time than anybody she ever heard of.

A month after her husband's death, on the 30th of June 1775, Mrs. Montagu set out for Northumberland, calling on her way at her estates at Burneston, near Bedale, and Eryholme, near Dalton, in Yorkshire, at both which places she entertained her tenants to a sumptuous dinner, "to show the good people they would have a kind landlady."³ When she arrived at her northern destination she found things looking very badly, owing to an exceptional drought which had lasted since the 18th of March. "Our little streams," she tells her mother-in-law, writing from Denton Hall on July 10th,

¹ *Newcastle Journal*, May 27th, 1775.

² Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, p. 193.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

"are all dry'd. My cows go every day to the Tyne to get drink. The Tyne Vale, where I live, used to look green and pleasant. The whole country is now a brown crust, with here and there a black hole of a coal-pit, so that I cannot boast of the beauty of our prospects. As to Denton, it has mightily the air of an ant-hill; a vast many black animals for ever busy. Near fourscore families are employ'd on my concerns here. Boys work in the colliery from seven years of age. I used to give my colliery people a feast when I came hither, but as the good souls (men and women) are very apt to get drunk, and, when drunk, very joyful, and sing, and dance, and holloa, and whoop, I dare not, *on this occasion*, trust their discretion to behave with proper gravity, so I content myself with killing a fat beast once a week, and sending to each family, once, a piece of meat. It will take time to get round to all my black friends. I had fifty-nine boys and girls to sup in the courtyard last night on rice pudding and boil'd beef; to-morrow night I shall have as many. It is very pleasant to see how the poor things cram themselves, and the expense is not great. We buy rice cheap, and skimmed milk and coarse beef serve the occasion. Some have more children than their labour will cloathe, and on such I shall bestow some apparel. Some benefits of this sort, and a general kind behaviour, give to the coalowner, as well as to them, a good deal of advantage. Our pitmen are afraid of being turned off, and that fear keeps an order and regularity amongst them that is very uncommon.

"The general coal trade and my concerns in it are, at present, in a thriving way, and if all goes on so well two years longer, and I live till then, I will establish a spinning, knitting, and sewing school for ye girls. . . . I walk about my farms,¹ and down to my colliery, like

¹ In 1765 there were nine farms on the East Denton estate—viz., the Scotswood, Woodhouse, Bridge, Stony Lee, Denton Hall, Low Hotch Pudding, High Hotch Pudding, Red Cow, and Black Swine farms.

a country gentlewoman of the last century. I rejoyce in the great improvement of my land here by good cultivation, but I do not like my tenants so well as those in Yorkshire. We are here a little too rustick, and speak a dialect that is dreadful to the auditor's nerves ; and as to the colliery, I cannot yet reconcile myself to seeing my fellow-creatures descend into the dark regions of the earth ; tho', to my great comfort, I hear them singing in the pits." . . .¹

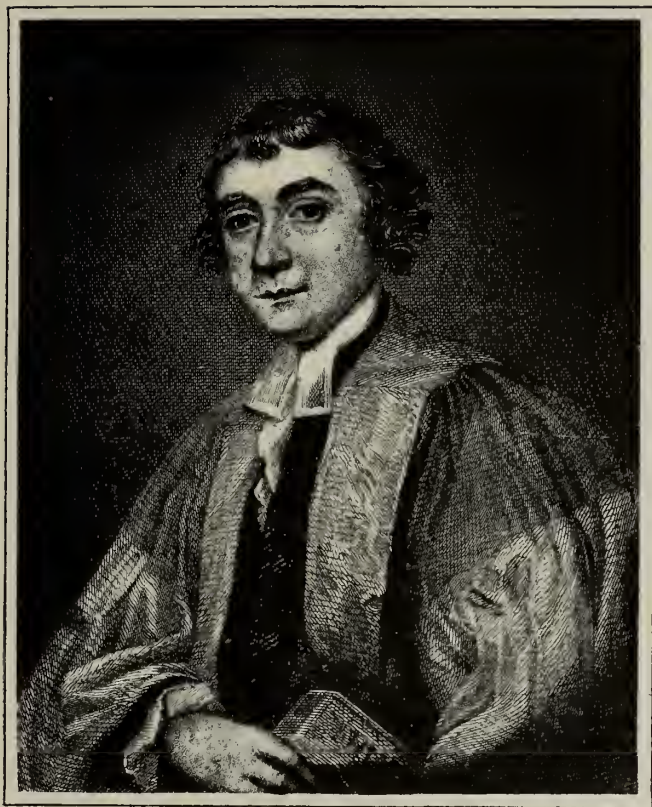
Mrs. Montagu mentioned in this letter that she was expecting Dr. Beattie² and his wife every day.

¹ Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, pp. 199-202.

² Dr. James Beattie, poet, essayist, and moral philosopher, was born at Laurencekirk, Kincardine, on the 25th October 1735, his father being a small shopkeeper and farmer. He was appointed, in 1758, to a vacant mastership at the Grammar School of Aberdeen, and two years later raised to the Chair of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Marischal College. In 1761 he published his first volume, *Original Poems and Translations*, and in 1770 his *Essay on Truth*, an attack on the philosophy of Hume. In 1771 appeared anonymously the first book of his poem, *The Minstrel*, which passed through four editions before the publication, in 1774, of the second book. He received in 1773 the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws at Oxford. A new edition of *The Minstrel*, together with such other poems as he wished to preserve, was published in 1777. It was dedicated to Mrs. Montagu, and her name was inserted in the last stanza of the first book of *The Minstrel*, which runs as follows :—

“ Here pause, my gothick lyre, a little while.
The leisure hour is all that thou can'st claim :
But on this verse if Montagu should smile,
New strains ere long shall animate thy frame :
And her applause to me is more than fame ;
For still with truth accords her taste refin'd.
At lucre or renown let others aim ;
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom Nature's charms inspire, and love of human-kind.”

“ It would give me no little pleasure,” the poet says in a letter to Mrs.



Sir Joshua Reynolds, pinx.]

DR. JAMES BEATTIE.

[R. Cooper, sc.]

On the publication of the first book of *The Minstrel* in 1771 she had been enthusiastic in her praise of it, and when, in the autumn of that year, the poet arrived in London with a letter of introduction to her from Dr. Gregory, she had given him a cordial welcome. From that time forward she became one of his most honoured friends and correspondents.

Dr. Beattie seems to have brought his two young sons to Denton with him on this visit, one of whom he had called after Mrs. Montagu. What the poet's impressions of Denton were we can only surmise. A writer, whose love of nature was such that he is said to have spent whole nights under the open sky, returning home at sunrise, and whose poems abound in fine descriptive passages, could scarcely fail to appreciate the beauties of Denton Dene and the Tyne Valley, and the charms of the old hall.

On his journey back to Scotland he met with a serious accident. "It was not without trembling and fear," wrote Mrs. Montagu to him on September 3rd, 1775, "I read the account of your overturn, and the dangerous circumstances with which it was attended. . . . If I had known when you had set out from

Montagu, "to see in the same poem the names of Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Gregory, two persons so dear to me, and who had so sincere a friendship for one another. Besides, madam, I beg leave to put you in mind that the first book of *The Minstrel* was published at his desire, and the second at yours." (*Life of Professor James Beattie*, by Sir William Forbes, vol. ii. p. 118.)

Other works by Dr. Beattie are *Dissertations, Moral and Critical* (1783), *Evidences of the Christian Religion* (1786), *Elements of Moral Science* (first vol., 1790; second vol., 1793), *Essays, Fragments in Prose and Verse* (1794).

Dr. Beattie married on June 28th, 1767, Mary Dunn, daughter of a rector of the Grammar School in Aberdeen, and had two sons, both of whom he survived. James Hay Beattie, the eldest, a young man of the greatest promise, died in 1790, and Montagu, the younger, in 1796. The poet himself was struck with palsy in April 1797, and died on the 18th of August 1803. He was buried beside his sons in St. Nicholas' churchyard, Aberdeen.

Denton how near to a precipice you would have been thrown, I should more earnestly have prayed for your preservation through the journey.”¹

Mrs. Montagu left Denton on the 1st of August, visiting the Archbishop of York (the Hon. Mr. Hay Drummond) at Bishopthorpe on her way to London. She spent three weeks at Tunbridge, intending afterwards to proceed to the south of France for the winter, but an attack of the influenza prevented her carrying out this project. The following summer, however, she visited Paris, accompanied by Miss Gregory, her nephew and heir, Mr. Montagu, his tutor, Mons. Blondel, and Miss Carter’s nephew, Montagu Pennington.

Mrs. Montagu did not visit Denton in 1777. Her Northumberland steward came up to London. He had singular news to tell of the election contest which was going on in Newcastle between Andrew Stoney Bowes and Sir John Trevelyan. “The town,” he said, “was in an uproar, and he was very weary of the bustle and treating the voters.” “Lady Strathmore,” he stated, “sits all day in the window at a public-house, from whence she sometimes lets fall some jewels or trinkets, which voters pick up, and then she gives them money for restoring them—a new kind of offering bribes.”²

Mrs. Montagu gave her interest to Sir John Trevelyan, the successful candidate.

¹ Sir William Forbes’ *Life and Writings of Professor James Beattie*, vol. i. pp. 379, 380.

The Rev. Dr. Porteus (afterwards Bishop of London), writing to Beattie on January 11th, 1776, alludes to this accident:—“I congratulate you most cordially,” he says, “on the many dangers you have escaped since I saw you, both in your own person and that of your little boys: your escape from the precipice where your chaise was overturned was really next to miraculous.”—*Life of Beattie*, vol. i. p. 388.

² Doran’s *A Lady of the Last Century*, p. 223.

She was at Denton in 1778, in which year it was generally believed that the French had a design to land at Shields and gain possession of the coal-mines on the Tyne.

Writing to Mrs. Montagu on May 29th, 1778, Miss Carter says : "I have read in the papers as if it was suspected that the French had some design upon the coal works in the north, but as you do not mention anything of it, I hope it is not true."¹

"I hope," she writes on June 21st, "there will be no invasion anywhere; but during this suspense and alarm it will be a relief to my mind, if you do take your northern journey, that Shields is so far from Denton."²

By the middle of July Mrs. Montagu had reached Denton, where her arrival seems to have been the occasion for a demonstration on the part of the pitmen.

"I love the honest zeal of your boisterous pitmen," writes Miss Carter. "I could not help thinking if they had executed their design of drawing your chaise, how much happier you must have felt than Sesostris, when his chariot was dragged by harnessed kings. His conveyance was the insolent triumph of prosperous oppression. Yours would have been the willing tribute of cordial gratitude and affection."³

"Lord Kames⁴ and Mrs. Drummond, his wife," she informs Mrs.

¹ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. iii. p. 71.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 75.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 78.

⁴ Henry Home, Lord Kames, an eminent Scottish judge and a voluminous writer on legal and speculative subjects, was born at Kames, in Berwickshire, in 1696, his father, George Home, being a country gentleman of small fortune. He was called to the Scottish Bar on the 19th January 1724, and took his seat on the bench on the 6th February 1752 with the title of Lord Kames. His judicial functions he exercised until within a few days of his death, which took place on the 27th of December 1782. He married, in 1741, Agatha, younger daughter of James Drummond, of Blair Drummond, Perthshire, and had an only son, who died 28th

Robinson, "came from Edinburgh, which is an hundred miles from Denton, on purpose to spend a few days with me. His lordship is a prodigy. At eighty-three he is as gay and as nimble as he was at twenty-five. His sight, hearing, and memory perfect. He has a great deal of knowledge and a lively imagination, and is a most entertaining companion."¹

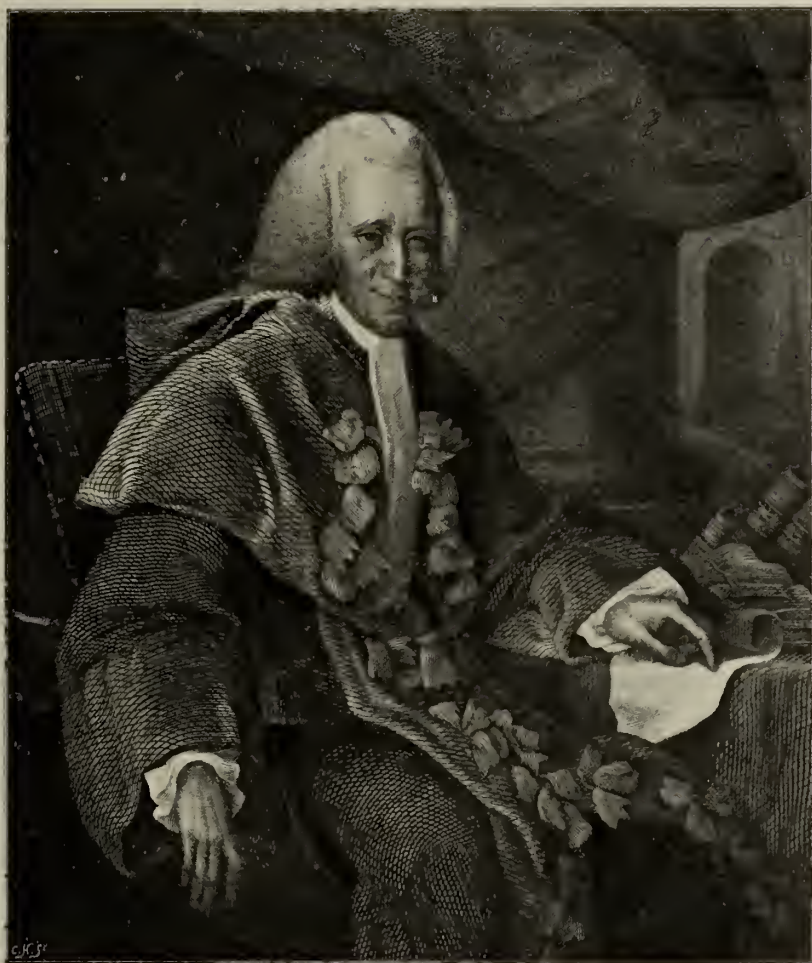
Writing to this nobleman from Sandleford on August 23rd, 1779, she refers to this visit to Denton, and informs him of the purchase of an estate there which she was making.

"My memory often presents to me the happy days we passed at Denton, and I never reflect upon them without tender gratitude to you and Mrs. Drummond for so kind and so agreeable a visit. I passed six weeks this spring at Bath, with great benefit to my health; from thence I came to this place, but have since been obliged to make two visits to London, on account of a large purchase I am making of an estate² adjoining to Denton, and also to attend to the completing my new house in town, which will be an excellent habita-

October 1819. Lord Kames was the author of *Remarkable Decisions of the Court of Session from 1716 to 1728* (1728), *Essays upon Several Subjects concerning British Antiquities*—(1) *Introduction of Feudal Law into Scotland*, (2) *Constitution of Parliament*, (3) *Honour and Dignity*, (4) *Succession and Descent* (1747), *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751), *Principles of Equity* (1760), *Elements of Criticism* (1762), a work which ran into seven editions before 1788, *An Historical Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the English Constitution* (1768), *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774), *Loose Hints upon Education* (1781), and other works. "His style," says Mr. G. F. Russell Baker, "is crabbed and wanting in variety, while his learning is frequently superficial and inaccurate." Dr. Johnson formed a poor opinion of him. When Boswell, boasting of the advancement of literature in Scotland, exclaimed, "But, sir, we have Lord Kames," Johnson replied, "You *have* Lord Kames. Keep him—ha! ha! ha! we do not envy you him."

¹ Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, pp. 246, 247.

² At West Kenton.



Sir Joshua Reynolds, pinx.]

LORD KAMES.

tion. The estate I am purchasing will likewise be a good acquisition; but, alas! the present state of the country throws a cloud which obscures these brilliant possessions. Perhaps the same hand which delivers this into the post will bring back an account that the French and Spaniards are landed.”¹

During the years 1779-81 Mrs. Montagu built the fine large mansion in Portman Square, known as Montagu House, to the completion of which she looked forward with some impatience, describing her passion for her new house as “almost equal to that of a lover for a mistress whom he thinks very handsome and very good, and such as will make him enjoy the dignity of life with ease.”²

During these years Mrs. Montagu was detained in the south, and though she made arrangements for her “journey into the north” in July 1781, yet there is reason to think the journey was not undertaken, a visit from her steward rendering it unnecessary. “My steward (from Northumberland),” she writes on the 4th of December, “who made his annual visit to me in November, told me that north of my estates there were many fields of oats and barley lying under the snow. I have been very busy with him, settling our year’s accounts, for these ten days past.”³

During the rainy summer of 1782 Mrs. Montagu remained at Sandleford.⁴ “The unfortunate state of the weather,” Miss Carter tells Mrs. Vesey, writing on September 21st, “prevented Mrs. Montagu from undertaking her northern journey.”

The following August (1783) she was at Denton,⁵ accompanied by her nephew, Matthew Montagu. The village at this time was suffering from a visitation of small-pox. “It is grievous, my dear

¹ *Memoirs of Lord Kames*, vol. ii. pp. 199, 200.

² Doran’s *A Lady of the Last Century*, p. 255.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁴ *Miss Carter’s Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. iii. p. 174.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 193.

friend," writes Miss Carter on September 22nd, "that you should be deprived of the high degree of pleasure which your benevolence would feel in the exercise of your kind intentions to your pitmen. As the wretched disease causes so great a mortality among these poor people, I should suppose the practice of inoculation is either unknown or reprobated in the north, as there is now scarcely any instance of this distemper prevailing where the method is used. I should be much alarmed at your being in such an infected air, if I had not long ago comforted myself with the persuasion that you have had the vile disorder, though I think you are perfectly right to keep out of the contagion, and hasten your return to Sandlesford, where I shall be most happy to hear you are safe arrived."¹ By the 8th of October she had left Denton and was staying for some days at Howsham, in Yorkshire, the seat of Mr. Cholmley. Miss Carter, writing to her on the 26th of November, congratulates her on having "completed such an undertaking as her northern expedition without any one unprosperous circumstance."²

In 1784 Mrs. Montagu, in common with all the other coalowners on the Tyne who had large bodies of men to pay, was inconvenienced by the large quantities of counterfeit halfpence which for two years had been in circulation in the country. The merchants and tradesmen of Newcastle, at a meeting held in the Guildhall on September 1st, 1784, decided to request coal-owners, glass-owners, manufacturers, and others, not to pay any larger quantities of copper coin to their workmen, servants, etc., than should be necessary for change, and that only in real mint halfpence.

"I sympathise with you," writes Miss Carter on October 1st, 1784, "in the distress of the reprobation of your copper coin; the prohibition in London is very whimsical; sometimes a halfpenny

¹ *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. iii. pp. 198, 199.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 185.

is as accurately examined as a guinea, and at others all kinds pass without difficulty. Suppose Mr. Brown¹ was to load a ship and send it to London for your *menus besoins* in Portman Square?—I do not say *plaisirs*, for I do not think it would be creditable to send a bag full to purchase a ticket for the opera, or a box for Mrs. Siddons's benefit. But your kitchen-maid might turn it to good account for matches, brick-dust, and other such articles."²

Writing to Mrs. Robinson on Friday, September 14th, 1787, Mrs. Montagu informs her "Montagu set out for Denton on Monday last to give his attention to opening a new seam of coal."³

Mrs. Montagu was at Denton in the autumn of 1789, which was probably her last visit. On the 22nd of September 1789,⁴ she wrote to Mrs. Robinson as follows:—

"Here, at my Gothick Mansion near Newcastle, the naiads are dirty with the coal-keels, and the dryads' tresses are torn and dishevelled with the rough blasts of Boreas. My lot has not fallen on a fair Ground, but it would be ungrateful not to own it is a goodly heritage, and makes a decent figure when it arrives at y^e shop of Howe & Co., in Fleet Street. A week after me arrived my nephew and neice Montagu. We are always here plagued with high winds,

¹ Mrs. Montagu's steward at Denton.

² *Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. iii. pp. 225, 226.

³ Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, p. 343.

⁴ The letter to Mrs. Robinson, dated 22nd Sept. 1786, and that to Miss Hannah More, dated Sept. 1789, both mention, in nearly the same words, the circumstance of Lady Spencer taking the writer to see the remains of Lord Bacon's seat at Gorhambury. The latter letter contains a reference to the visit made by William Wilberforce to Mrs. Montagu at Sandleford, and to Miss Hannah More at Cowslip Green. From Wilberforce's journal we know that he was at Sandleford on July 27th and 28th, 1789, and at Cowslip Green from the 20th to the 24th of August 1789, so that there can be no doubt as to the correctness of the date of the letter to Miss More. In the letter to Mrs. Robinson, therefore, we must assume that the date 1786 is a misprint for 1789.

and this season they have raged with great violence; but, as this house was built in 1620, I hope it will not now yield to storms it has braved for now two hundred years. The walls are of immense thickness, having been built of strength to resist our Scottish neighbours, who, before the Union, made frequent visits to this



ENTRANCE GATEWAY TO DENTON HALL.

part of the world. My Gothick windows admit light, but exclude prospect, so that when sitting down I can see only the tops of the trees."¹ The letter was franked by Mr. Matthew Montagu, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

This Matthew Montagu was the younger son of Morris Robinson,

¹ Doran's *A Lady of the Last Century*, pp. 333, 334.

Mrs. Montagu's brother, and as her acknowledged heir, had assumed her name. He had married, in 1785, Elizabeth Charlotte, daughter and heiress of Francis Charlton, Esq., a ward in chancery, with a fortune of £50,000. Like his aunt, he had "a happy turn for business," and applied himself to learning all the details connected with the working of a mine. Much of the Denton business was during the latter years of Mrs. Montagu's life transacted by him.

On her return to London Mrs. Montagu wrote to Miss Hannah More:—"Your letter found me sore busied with little cares. I was then preparing for my northern expedition; many orders I had to give, many directions to inculcate. I said to myself, therefore, I shall have a more perfect enjoyment of my friend's correspondence when I am not in all this bustle and embarrassment with a mind divided between the place I am leaving and that to which I am going. So I will not write till I am settled in Northumberland. But, alas! when I got there I was the captive of worldly cares and perfectly buried in coal-pits, and I returned only five days ago to upper day and our great metropolis. I know you will be glad to hear that my health has rather been improved than impaired by my northern expedition."¹

Though unable any longer to journey as far as Denton, she did not lose her interest in the place, as is evident from the following letter, which she wrote on October 20th, 1774, to Mr. Woodhouse, Scotswood, her staithman there:—

"Pray give y^e enclosed immediately to y^e School Master who is to be my Butler. I wd have pottatoes, barley, and butter as usual, and shall want also coal, and I should be glad of a dry'd Salmon.

"I desire old Mrs. Brown may be told I wish to have her spin me some Huck a back, and that I shall set a great value upon it for her sake, and give my love to her and her good old man.

¹ *Life and Letters of Mrs. Hannah More*, vol. ii. p. 194.

"I hope you sent them a goose and barrel of beer at Michaelmas. I was glad to learn by your letter that our Pittmen kept constant at their work. I believe I mentioned to you that you are to give Dixon five guineas towards his journey, and to advance him a quarter's wages if it will be useful to him."¹ A few years later, in 1796, it was announced in the Newcastle newspapers that the lease, by virtue of which the Denton colliery was working, would expire on the 1st of May 1799, and Mrs. Montagu's shares were advertised to be sold on November 12th, 1796.²

On the 25th of August 1800, Mrs. Montagu died at her house in Portman Square at the ripe age of eighty years.³

¹ *Monthly Chronicle*, July 1891, p. 295.

² "Two-third parts and shares of and in one undivided fourth part of all the freehold collieries, coal-mines, and seams of coal, and other mines as well opened as not opened, lying, being, and remaining within and under several lands or grounds at East Denton, in the county of Northumberland, containing 168^a 2^r 8^p, or thereabouts; and also of and in one undivided sixth part of the freehold collieries, etc., under several grounds at East Denton, containing 484^a 2^r 13^p."—*Newcastle Courant*, October 29th, 1796.

³ "25th ult. In Portman Square, London, Mrs. Montagu, relict of the late Edward Montagu, Esq., of Denton Hall, Northumberland, grandson of the first Earl of Sandwich, daughter of Matthew Robinson, Esq., late of West Layton, in the county of Yorkshire, and Horton in Kent, and sister of the present Lord Rokeby."—*Newcastle Chronicle*, September 6th, 1800.

Montagu House (now Portman House) passed out of the hands of the Rokeby family in 1872. It forms the subject of an illustration in the *Graphic* of December 14th, 1872 (p. 568). Excellent views of the exterior of the house, of the reception-room, hall and staircase, saloon, and the ceiling in the saloon, appear in the *Gentlewoman* of June 16th, 1894.

DENTON HALL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

AT the beginning of the nineteenth century Denton Hall was occupied by William Thomas, the viewer of East Denton Colliery. His tenancy of the old manor-house probably dated from the time of Mrs. Montagu's last visit in 1789, or shortly afterwards. He was a self-made man of great activity, integrity, and judgment.

Coming to Newcastle a poor lad, he had worked himself into a position of trust, and extensive estates were gradually committed to his charge. In the first list of the members of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle, printed in 1793, appears the name of "William Thomas, Denton-hall." Two years later his employer, Matthew Montagu, Esq., M.P., was elected an ordinary member of this society. Mr. Thomas took an active interest in the monthly meetings, and had a considerable share in the drawing up of queries on coal and coal-mining, which in the year 1794 were printed and circulated by the society, and on the 12th of May 1795 he read, by way of answer to them, "Remarks on the state of the coal seams and their accompanying strata within the Montagu Main Colliery." In September 1796, in consequence of an accident occasioned by the pricking of an ancient waste filled with water at Slatyford, through which six persons lost their lives, he drew up and read on the 13th of that month a very important paper, entitled "Hints for the formation of a plan to be proposed to the coal-owners for establishing an office in Newcastle for recording important

information respecting the coal-works and wastes in this neighbourhood."¹

When the proposal of a canal between the eastern and western seas was commanding public attention he was the first to suggest that preference should be given to an iron road. His views on the



VIEW FROM BENWELL BANK.

subject were presented to the Society in a paper read on the 11th of February 1800, entitled "Observations on the propriety of intro-

¹ This paper, in consequence of the much more extensive mischief produced by the same cause at Heaton Colliery in 1815, was printed by the Society in this year, with another paper by William Chapman proposing some legislative interference.

ducing roads on the principle of coal-waggonways for the general conveyance of goods: with a particular reference to showing the practicability of a road on this principle from Newcastle to Hexham."

In 1807 Denton Main Colliery was let to Messrs. Cooksons, Cuthberts, & Co., who purchased from Matthew Montagu the stock of colliery materials, and appear to have sunk a new pit near the river.¹ Mr. Thomas removed to West Denton Hall, where he seems to have acted as a land-agent or surveyor for several estates.² In the *Newcastle Courant* of February 24th, 1810, "the mansion-house called Denton Hall" was advertised to be let. "The mail-coach between Newcastle and Carlisle," states the advertisement, "passes the house every day." The hall was taken by Richard Hoyle, Esq., a native of Ripponden, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, who had settled in Newcastle, and the *Newcastle Courant* of January 5th, 1811, announced the birth of one of his sons at Denton on the 21st of the previous month.

Educated at Emanuel College, Cambridge, Mr. Hoyle had pursued the study of chemistry with some success, and in 1801, in conjunction with Dr. Stancliffe, had prepared a course of lectures on this subject for the Literary and Philosophical Society at Newcastle. His attainments in this branch of science enabled him to adopt many improvements in the processes of various manufactures with which he was

¹ Mackenzie's *View of Northumberland*, vol. ii. p. 591.

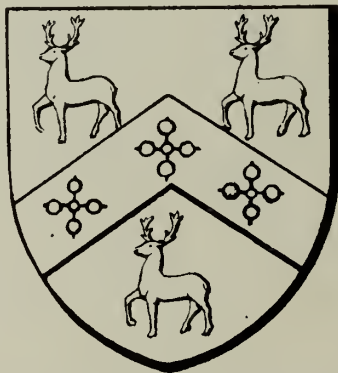
² Mr. Thomas afterwards went to reside in Charlotte Square, where, on April 20th, 1824, he died, aged 66 years. He was buried in St. John's Churchyard. In the list of north-country men of mark in Parson & White's *Directory* of 1828 appears the name of "William Thomas, an eminent colliery viewer; died 1824." For my account of William Thomas I am indebted to the thirty-second year's report of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle, and to Mr. James Clephan's article, "Over the Churchyard Wall," reprinted in the *Monthly Chronicle*, March 1887, p. 20.

connected. He died at Denton Hall on the 22nd of May 1839, aged sixty years, leaving three sons, Richard, John Theodore, the father of the present coroner of Newcastle, and Charles. Gibson, another son, had died in December 1828.

The hall was afterwards occupied by Richard Hoyle, the second of the name, until his death in 1867, and from that date to 1889 by his eldest son, Richard Ormerod Rastrick Hoyle, Esq., now of Normount, near Newcastle.

The owners of the hall during this century have chiefly been the

ROKEBY.



Arms—Vert, on a chevron between three roebucks trippant or, as many quatrefoils gules.

Crest—A roebuck trippant or.

Motto—Sola in Deo salus.

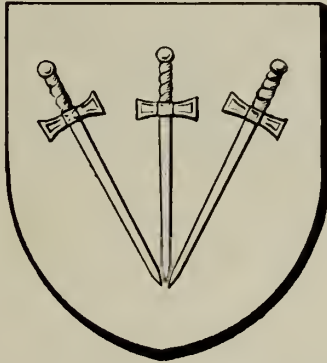
Barons Rokeby. Mrs. Montagu, as has already been stated, devised her property to her nephew, Matthew Montagu, Esq., who, on the death of his brother (19th April 1829), became the fourth Lord Rokeby. This title he only enjoyed for two years, dying on 1st September 1831. Denton passed successively into the hands of two

of his sons, Edward, fifth Lord Rokeby (died unmarried 7th April 1847), and Henry, sixth Lord Rokeby, a gallant general, who commanded a division of the British army in the Crimea. This nobleman dying in 1883 without male issue, the title became extinct.

The next owner of Denton was Lord Henry William Montagu Paulet, second son of John, fourteenth Marquess of Winchester, by Mary, daughter of the sixth Lord Rokeby.

In 1886 Lord Paulet sold the Denton estate; part of it—that containing the hall—was bought by John Henderson, Esq., of

PAULET.



Arms—Sable, three swords in pile, points in base argent, pommels and hilts or.

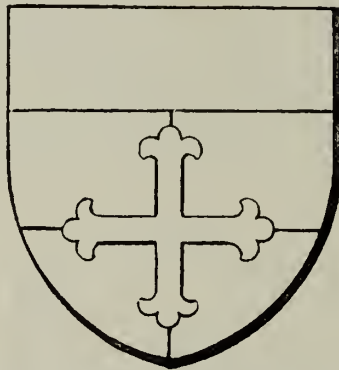
Crest—On a mount vert a falcon rising or, gorged with a ducal coronet gules.

Motto—Ayez Loyauté.

Allendale, who, on the 6th of December 1889, sold the hall and land adjoining to its present owner, William Andrew I'Anson, Esq., second son of the late William Andrew I'Anson, Esq., M.R.C.S.Eng., by Ann, daughter of William Armstrong, Esq., of Child's House, Morpeth. He, on gaining possession of the hall, restored it to some-

thing like its former dignity, preserving all its ancient features and removing all the incongruous additions made by Mrs. Montagu.

P'ANSON.



Arms—Quarterly azure and gules, a cross fleury and chief or.

Crest—A dexter arm per pale azure and or, cuffed argent with hand proper grasping cross as in arms.

Motto—Faire mon Devoir.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH OF DENTON VILLAGE AND HALL.

FOLLOWING the old military road westward from Newcastle for three miles, we reach, at the foot of a long and steep slope called Benwell Bank, the little village called Denton. The lower part is known as Denton Burn, the upper part as Denton Square.

A few yards west of Thorntree House, on the south side of the road, surrounded by wooden railings, is an interesting remnant of the Roman Wall. It is 36 feet long, and about 9 feet in width. In Brand's time (1789) five courses of facing-stones on both sides were to be seen. Most of these have since disappeared. Denton Bridge crosses a shallow streamlet which runs through a prettily-wooded dene to the Tyne. On the west side of it stands a small Wesleyan chapel, built in 1889.

The founder of the sect to which it belongs had a very remarkable escape from danger and death at Denton on Monday, the 20th of June 1774. The episode is best narrated in his own words:—

“About nine I set out for Horsley, with Mr. Hopper and Mr. Smith. I took Mrs. Smith and her two little girls in the chaise with me. About two miles from the town, just on the brow of the hill, on a sudden both the horses set out, without any visible cause, and flew down the hill like an arrow out of a bow. In a minute John fell off the coach-box. The horses then went on full speed, sometimes to the edge of the ditch on the right; sometimes on the left. A cart came up against them; they avoided

it as exactly as if the man had been on the box. A narrow bridge was at the foot of the hill. They went directly over the middle of it. They ran up the next hill with the same speed; many persons meeting us, but getting out of the way. Near the top of the hill was a gate which led into a farmer's yard. It stood open. They turned short, and ran through it, without touching the gate on one side, or the post on the other. I thought, 'However, the gate which is on the other side of the yard, and is shut, will stop them.' But they rushed through it as if it had been a cobweb, and galloped on through the cornfield. The little girls cried out, 'Grandpapa, save us!' I told them, 'Nothing will hurt you; do not be afraid;' feeling no more fear or care (Blessed be God!) than if I had been sitting in my study. The horses ran on till they came to the edge of a steep precipice.¹ Just then Mr. Smith, who could not overtake us before, galloped in between. They stopped in a moment. Had they gone on ever so little, he and we must have gone down together."²

Mounting the bank we pass on the left some of the older cottages, having low pantiled roofs, and on the right, immediately above the present post-office, a two-storey building that was formerly a farmhouse and inn called "The Masons' Arms"—"a house," so runs an advertisement in the *Newcastle Journal* of November 22nd, 1766, "remarkably noted for its great custom in the publican way on account of its good situation for carriers, etc."

Running parallel with the road, on the south side of it, just

¹ A few yards to the north of Denton Hall is a quarry now nearly filled up, and this, according to the tradition of the village, was the precipice on the edge of which Mr. Wesley's runaway horses were brought to a standstill. The old "Masons' Arms" was formerly a farmhouse, and its yard was probably that referred to by Mr. Wesley, the cornfield being the close called "Low White Field."

² Wesley's *Journal*, vol. iv. pp. 19, 20. 5th ed.

behind the hedge, is a grass-covered mound which contains the core of the Roman Wall.

About 150 yards to the south of it, in the same field—the High Stony Lea—the mounds and ditches of the vallum are clearly discerned.

Reaching the cottages called Denton Square, which are built upon the Roman Wall, we have on our right a short avenue of



DENTON SQUARE.

sycamores leading to the entrance-gates of East Denton House and Denton Hall.

Denton Hall faces east and west, and it is the west front which we approach by the shady carriage drive. It presents a very picturesque appearance, with its projecting gables and rows of mullioned windows, its square-headed labels and moulded

string-courses. The ivy too, which almost covers the old walls, lends a further air of antiquity to the building. Until a few years ago two quaint dormer windows broke the long expanse of the pantiled roof. It was unfortunately found necessary to remove them, the main wall, although 3 feet thick, not being sufficiently strong to support their weight. On this west side of the hall there was originally a large walled courtyard, but this has also disappeared, and green lawns have taken its place.

The hall is entered through a picturesque little porch, measuring on the inside 7 feet by 6 feet. It is much later in date than the hall, and was probably added by Mr. Montagu in 1758, when several alterations were made to the building. Part of a label above one of the windows has been cut away to admit of its being attached to the hall.

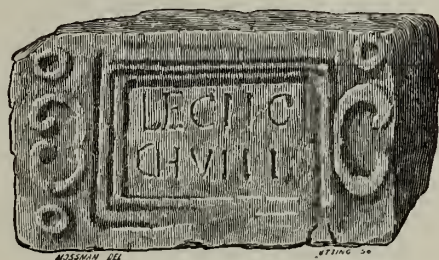
Within the porch are preserved a few Roman and mediæval antiquities found in the grounds and neighbourhood. The Roman



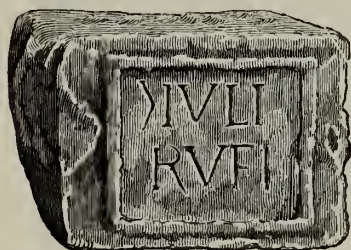
antiquities consist of—(1) a small altar, 7 inches by $5\frac{1}{2}$ in size, with a dedication to Jupiter, the best and greatest (Iovi O[ptimo] M[aximo]), engraved on three of its sides. It was found, in 1822, a little west of the hall. (2) A carved stone, 12 inches by $7\frac{1}{2}$, bearing the following inscription:—



—which, expanded, reads, “*Legionis Secundæ Augustæ Cohors prima fecit*”—an inscription recording the connection of the first cohort of the second Augustan legion with the mural works. It was found near the hall in 1869. (3) A similar slab, set up by



the eighth cohort of the second legion. Another slab, with the same inscription, also found at East Denton, is now preserved in the library of the Dean and Chapter, Durham, and a third one is built up in a garden wall opposite to the back kitchen door of Denton Wood House, a little south of the hall. (4) Two centurial stones found in 1804, when a portion of the Roman Wall, about 200 yards in length, a little to the west of the hall, was levelled. They are inscribed :—



—the century of Julius Rufus.

The mediæval antiquities consist of—(1) a grave-cover with a forester's horn and belt carved on it; and (2) the head of a double-

light pointed window, which had probably belonged to the ancient chapel of Denton built by the Priors of Tynemouth, or some other building earlier in date than the hall.



ANCIENT GRAVE-COVER.

From the porch we pass through the original entrance—a shoulder-headed doorway with the initials of the builder and his wife, and the



EARLY POINTED WINDOW.

date of the building, above it—into the old Dining Hall (A). This is a large rectangular chamber 36 feet by 18 feet, lighted by three triple-mullioned windows, two on the west and one on the east, the latter being modern, though replacing an original one. It gives access to the present Dining Room (B) on the north, the Smoking



DINING-ROOM.

Room (C) on the north-east, the Kitchen (D) on the south, and the principal staircase on the east.

The Montagus curtailed its length by about 7 feet to make a passage, carrying a partition-wall from the porch to the opposite

side of the building, which was pierced for a doorway, a portion of the east window being blocked up. The old fire-place was partly built up. These additions have been removed by the present owner, who has restored the chamber to something like its original state. He opened out the old buttery-hatch through which the dishes were passed from the kitchen. On its chamfered jambs and sill were found some of the old mason's marks, two resembling a St. Andrew's cross with its limbs united at one end, and two a couple of lozenges conjoined. There are two other mason's marks on the jambs of the door leading into the kitchen. The fire-place, the same width as the original, viz. 8 feet, has been modernised, owing to the large stone lintel being fractured, and a massive oak overmantel supported on columns erected above it.

This chamber is filled with fine black oak furniture, some of it nearly as old as the building.

At the foot of the staircase, standing on a modern stone balustrade, is a font of fourteenth or fifteenth century date, which no doubt belonged to the ancient chapel already referred to. The bowl is septagonal in shape, with oak-leaf ornamentation running round it, and it rests on a portion of the pillared stem.

In the present Dining Room (B) is a finely-moulded Jacobean fire-place, $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, and in the wall near it is a locker of the same date.

The Kitchen (D) also contains an ancient fire-place, which is 10 feet in width. Between the kitchen and back-kitchen (E), in the thickness of the wall under the secondary staircase, is a small recess about $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $1\frac{1}{2}$, which, it is said, on imaginative grounds merely, was the entrance to a subterranean passage leading to Benwell tower.

Proceeding up the principal staircase, which is one of the features of the house, showing the influence of the earlier class of Border dwellings, being of stone and somewhat narrow, we pass on the right

a small sitting-room (G), then a bedroom (H), adjoining it and facing west, called "Silky's Room" on account of its associations with the Denton ghost, and we enter the Drawing Room (J), a large and stately chamber 30 feet by 19½ feet, immediately above the old Dining Hall. It has two mullioned windows of four lights each on the west, and one window of the same size on the east. The



ANCIENT FONT.

principal feature is the ancient fire-place, 7 feet wide, the lintel and jambs of which are ornamented with a vine-branch and grape pattern admirably carved.

From the drawing-room we pass into the Breakfast Room (K), 23 feet by 18 feet, at the south-west corner of the building, which contains an original fire-place, plain in character, now partly built up, and we thence proceed, past the head of the staircase leading down to the kitchen, to a small room (L), 17 feet by 7 feet, known as

"Dr. Johnson's Room." Here, it has been stated,¹ were preserved a desk and bookcase used by the great lexicographer during his visits to Denton. From the window you look upon a row of sycamore trees to the east of the hall, the walk beneath which has been styled "Dr. Johnson's Walk."



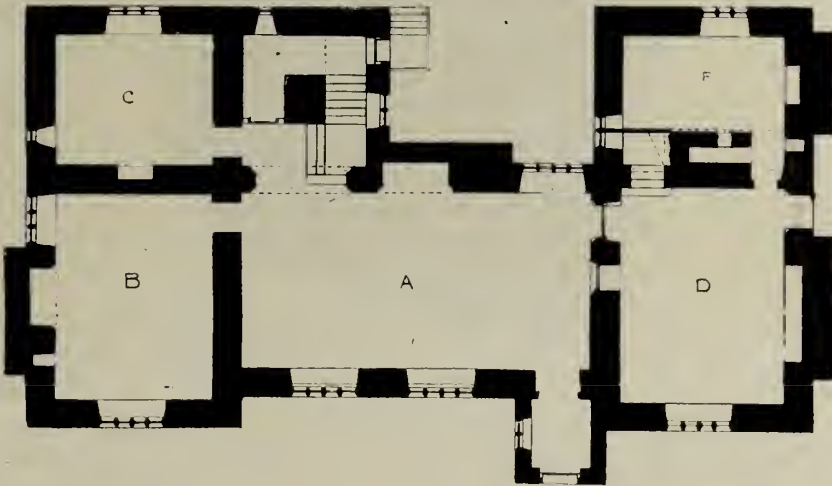
KITCHEN.

To discredit a pretty story is perhaps a little ungracious, but it must however be admitted, though reluctantly, that there is not the slightest ground for the statement made by Mr. Sidney Gibson in 1848, and repeated by Mr. W. A. Hoyle in 1885, that Dr.

¹ *Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, vol. ii. p. 44.



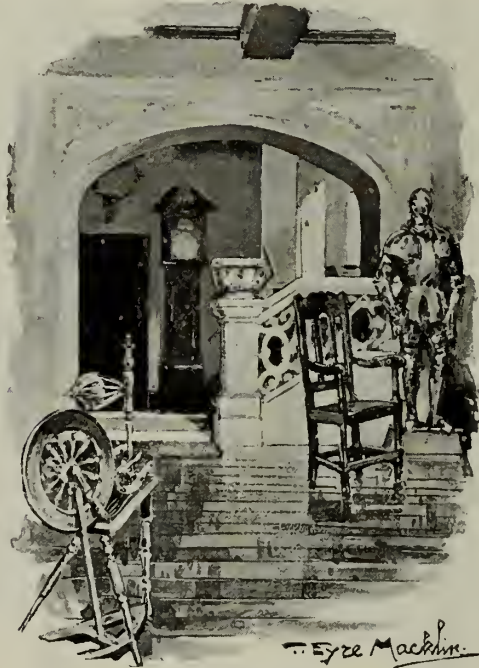
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1" = 10' 0" 5' 0" 20' 30' 40' 50' FEET

Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Garrick had been guests of Mrs. Montagu at Denton Hall. They certainly visited her at her Hill Street and Portman Square houses, and by an exercise of the imagination it was perhaps not difficult to transfer these distinguished visitors to Denton Hall.



STAIRCASE.

It may be confidently asserted that had men so eminent in literature, art, and the drama visited the north of England, the local newspapers would have recorded the fact. No one acquainted with the press of last century can doubt that paragraphs similar to the following would have appeared in the local news columns:—

“On Saturday last arrived in this city from France, the Rev. Mr.

Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy*."—*Newcastle Journal*, June 30th, 1764.

"Passed through this town since our last, the ingenious Dr. Smollett, for Bath."—*Newcastle Journal*, August 23rd, 1766.

"On Wednesday, Mrs. Piozzi (lately Mrs. Thrale) passed through this town on her road to Scotland."—*Newcastle Courant*, July 4th, 1789.

The only time when Dr. Johnson came so far north was when he



DR. JOHNSON'S ROOM.

made his well-known journey to Scotland in 1773. The *Newcastle Journal* of August 14th-21st, 1773, duly apprised its readers of the fact:—

"A few days ago passed through this town the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, author of the English Dictionary and several other learned works."

From a letter that Johnson wrote to Boswell from Newcastle, we know that he arrived in this town on Tuesday night, August 11th, 1773. Mr. Justice Chambers, who was travelling north at this time to

take leave of his relations at Newcastle previous to sailing for the East Indies, conducted Dr. Johnson to his native town. Johnson probably rested a day or two in Newcastle, but it is unlikely that he visited Denton, as Mrs. Montagu was then at Sandleford.¹ He arrived in Edinburgh on Saturday, the 14th of August, having been accompanied from Newcastle to that city by Mr. William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell.

On his return he left Edinburgh on the 22nd of November, and arrived in London on the 27th, so that it is evident he made no stay on the road.

In all the numerous letters written by and to Mrs. Montagu, covering very completely the period from 1758, when she first visited Denton, to 1784, the year of Johnson's death, there is not a paragraph hinting at such a notable event as a visit to Denton by the most famous literary man of the eighteenth century.

It must further be added that Johnson was never on such terms of friendship with Mrs. Montagu as to warrant the belief that he would undertake a wearisome journey to pay her a visit, not to say "frequent visits," at her country-seat in the north. He took a malicious pleasure in combating her opinions and inciting others to do so, and was not sparing in his criticism of her published work. Beattie attributed his strictures on her *Essay on Shakespeare* to "an envious turn of mind." "Mrs. Montagu," he averred, "had more wit than anybody, and Johnson could not bear that any person should be thought to have wit but himself;" but this is a view that can scarcely be maintained without considerable modification. It is not improbable

¹ See letter from Miss Carter to Mrs. Montagu, dated August 14th, 1773 (*Miss Carter's Letters to Mrs. Montagu*, vol. ii. p. 208). Mrs. Montagu dated a letter from Sandleford to Lord Kames on October 27th, 1773. (*Memoirs of Lord Kames*, vol. ii., Appendix, p. 90.)

that Mrs. Montagu's affectations grated on Johnson as they did on the Rev. Alexander Carlyle, and made him quarrelsome. In 1774 he offended Mrs. Montagu by neglecting to acknowledge an invitation which she had sent him to one of her assemblies at Hill Street, and in 1781 he aroused her bitter resentment by certain passages in his *Life of Lyttelton*, alluding somewhat contemptuously to that nobleman, who was an intimate friend of hers, and she never treated him afterwards with entire cordiality.

Dr. Gregory, Mrs. Chapone, Dr. Beattie, Lord Kames, and S. H. Grimm,¹ the water-colour painter, all visited Denton, and it is to be regretted that to this list there are no grounds for adding the distinguished name of Dr. Johnson.

The second floor, containing several bedrooms, dressing-rooms, store-rooms, etc., has been much altered since the seventeenth century. Formerly the rooms, with the exception of those at the head of the staircases, opened one into another; now they open into a passage, in which is the fire-place of one of them, now built up.

The third floor contains six bedrooms, three of which have original fire-places.

The roof formerly consisted of strong oak beams and rafters

¹ Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, water-colour painter, born in 1734 at Burgdorf, near Berne, in Switzerland, came to London in 1769. He sent two drawings of "The Death of Priam" and "The Feast of the Centaurs" to the first exhibition of the Royal Academy. In 1774 he exhibited two drawings of the Distribution of the Maundy in the Chapel Royal at Whitehall, which were subsequently engraved by James Basire. He was chiefly noted for his skill and accuracy as a topographical draughtsman, and was employed by Sir Richard Kaye to make drawings in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and other counties, and by Sir William Burrell to make drawings for his Sussex collection. "In this line," says Mr. Lionel Cust, "Grimm can hardly be excelled." His drawing of Denton Hall is in the Kaye collection at the British Museum, and has been reproduced for the present volume. Grimm died in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, 14th April 1794, aged 60.

supporting sandstone slabs, which were fastened down by sheepshank bones. A few of these remain.

Descending to the ground-floor, we pass through a doorway at the foot of the principal staircase to the east side of the hall. The jargonelle pear-tree trained up the north-eastern gable-end is said to be two hundred years old. We follow the footpath eastward round the lawn, noticing several Roman facing-stones from the great Barrier in the wall on the north side, and a portion of a grave-cover, which has had a sword carved on it, on the top of the low wall on the south side.

From the walk already referred to, which is close to a sunk fence, we have a pleasant view eastward of a part of Denton village, the farmhouse called "Silver Hill"¹ in the Benwell grounds and the ridge formerly occupied by the Roman station of Condercum, and southward of the heights above the Tyne on which Whickham is seated, and the wooded valley of the Derwent.

The field in front of us was known about 1730 as the "Green Field." Between two trees in its north-east corner it is said runs "Kitty's Drift," a tunnel six feet in width and about the same in height, cut in 1780 from Kenton to the Tyne, a distance of three miles, by Mr. Christopher Bedlington, for the conveyance of coals.

Between the hall and the turnpike road lie two old and sheltered kitchen-gardens, separated by a high stone wall. They are well stocked with wall, espalier, and other fruit-trees, and brightened with a profusion of old-fashioned garden flowers.

The ancient chapel of the Priors of Tynemouth is said to have stood in these gardens, a little to the south-west of the hall. A course of ancient masonry beneath the gardener's cottage and the

¹ "A farm of land in Benwell called Silverhill, lying on the north side of the military road and adjoining upon Denton on the west, containing 66 acres and upwards."—*Newcastle Journal*, February 9th, 1765.

wall to the west of it may possibly have belonged to it. "Steps, supposed to lead to a vaulted chamber,"¹ says Mr. Sidney Gibson, writing in 1848, "were disclosed in the course of digging for the formation of the pleasure-garden to the south of the hall." Some large stone coffins and grave-covers which have been found are evidences of an ancient graveyard here.

In the north-west angle of the garden there still exist the foundations of a building which stood within memory, and is described as octagonal in shape, lighted by pointed windows. It seems to have been used as an ice-house, but with respect to its date or the purpose for which it was built nothing unfortunately is known.

¹ Gibson, a son of the first Richard Hoyle, is stated by a very old inhabitant of the village to have excavated for himself an underground chamber close to the west wall of the garden. It is a question whether this was not identical with Mr. Sidney Gibson's "vaulted chamber."



DENTON HALL FROM THE SOUTH-WEST, WITH GARDENER'S COTTAGE.

THE STORY OF "SILKY."

DENTON HALL has for nearly a century had the reputation of being haunted by a spirit who takes the form of a woman dressed in a white silk dress of antique fashion, and is commonly called "Silky," although also known as old "Barberry." It was when Mr. William Thomas was the tenant of the hall that she first began to attract attention. Had there been any gossip about her previously it is almost certain that Mrs. Montagu, who had shown an interest in the subject of "second-sight," would have made some reference to the story in her voluminous correspondence.

According to the testimony of a very old native of Denton (still living, 1894), there were formerly at the hall two domestic servants named Ruth and Hannah Bell, sisters, one of whom dreamed that a large sum of money was buried under a flagstone in the entrance-hall, and impressed by the occurrence, told her sister of it, and she communicated the secret to her master in the morning. He made light of the dream at the time, but secretly had the stone raised, and as signs of wealth were shortly afterwards observed in the Thomas family, it was reported he had found the treasure.

In course of time there were heard in the passages and rooms of Denton Hall mysterious rustlings, and glimpses were caught of a ghostly figure supposed to be engaged in a vain search for the buried gold.

She was also seen in the grounds during unholy hours, and

"Barberry with the straw-hat" was more effectual than a bull-dog in keeping the children of the village away from the apple-trees.

"Silky" is generally accounted for by the tradition of some tragedy connected with a sister's jealousy or treachery, the details of which have been lost.

The earliest published account of "Silky" appears in Richardson's *Table-Book of Remarkable Occurrences*, from the pen of Mr. Thomas Doubleday, and is given in the form of a story communicated to him by an aged lady of his acquaintance, but has evidently been touched up very considerably by the writer. When about eighteen years of age this lady went on a visit to the Thomas's at Denton Hall. A day or two after her arrival she accompanied her friends to a ball given by a gentleman in the neighbourhood, and on her return to the hall had retired to her bedroom, and, seated in an antique high-backed chair, was busy arranging her hair and thinking over the events of the evening, when on glancing towards the other side of the ancient tiled fire-place, she observed, occupying a similar chair to her own, an old lady dressed in a flowered satin gown, peaked and long-waisted, and wearing a satin hood of peculiar shape. On her fingers were some rings of great size and seeming value.

Supposing her to be a housekeeper or dependant in the family, the young lady was rather astonished than frightened, and stared curiously at her strange companion, who thereupon addressing her abruptly and familiarly, hinted significantly that the prosperity of the family she had just been visiting was unreal, and warned her of their impending ruin; and then, moving away with a distinct rustle of silk, vanished mysteriously from the room. The young lady rushed to the door but found it locked, she herself having turned the key before sitting down.

At the breakfast-table the next morning she mentioned the singular circumstances, and her host and hostess, listening sympathetically, told her that she was not the first who had been alarmed

in that way, that several visitors had had a similar experience and left the hall in consequence.

Two sisters of Macready, the actor, who were guests at the hall, came down one morning to breakfast, it is said, and requested to be sent from the house at once, declaring they would never revisit it.



"SILKY'S" ROOM.

They could never be persuaded to confess what it was that had terrified them.

"Silky" is also stated on another occasion to have noiselessly thrown open the door of a bedroom and rustled into the middle of the room with a warning arm extended. She is apparently a benevolent spirit, and the old pitmen of the last century are stated

to have averred that more than once they had been warned by it to fly from impending danger in the mine.

"Silky's haunts," says Mr. W. A. Hoyle,¹ "are not confined to any particular room, although two rooms especially have a ghostly reputation. She has been seen flitting along the passages, up the stone staircases, and outside the house in the shady walks. On one occasion, to the terror of an old nurse, she stood silently in the doorway, barring the entrance; on another she seized the hand of a sleeping inmate of the house in the middle of the night and drew it towards her, leaving a touch that was felt with pain for days. A death in the family, however distant, or a warning of good or ill fortune, is frequently marked by her sudden appearance, apparently indiscriminately, to any one in the house; or the same occasions are marked by unearthly noises. It was but lately (1884) that Silky was heard, apparently dragging something through two unoccupied rooms, down a flight of stairs to a window which was flung open."

"Silky" is stated to have been seen within quite recent years. She appeared in one of the passages to a workman in the hall, who was ill for weeks after, and lately she has been seen leaning against the ancient fire-place in the dining-room in a meditative attitude. It may, however, be safely affirmed that imagination is responsible for these later stories.

¹ *The Haunted Homes and Family Traditions of Great Britain*, by John H. Ingram, 1886, p. 419.

APPENDIX.

(I.)

DENTON COAL-MINES.

(STATE PAPERS, DOMESTIC, JAMES I., VOL. 58, NO. 17.)

To the Right Ho^{ble} the Earle of Salisbury Lord Highe
Trẽar of England.

The humble peticõn of Anthony Errington and
Roger Errington of the towne and County of
Newcastle vpon Tyne

shewing

That they and their Auncesto^{rs} haue byn ancient tenants of Denton beinge some tymes pcell of the possessions of the Monastery of Tynmooth and that about 30 yeares since the peticoners Ancestors discov'ed a Coale Myne in Denton aforesaid & did take a lease from the late queene Eliza: of the same for the yerely rent of x^{li}. That in Trinitye terme last they repared vnto London to p^rchase the said Coalemyne vnderstanding that Mr. Garawaye & other the Contracto^{rs} had poure to sell yt as indeed they had But before their Cominge vp or any warninge thereof resonably given vnto theis peticoners One William Courte on of Mr. Audito^r Paddon his Clerks by informacõ of Mr. Lyons Receivo^r for the said Countye had caused the said Coale Myne to be past wth the Contracto^{rs} for Leases in Rev'con for lx yeres though they knewe full well that the said Contractors for Leases had noe auctoryty for the same in respect yt appeareth by their articles made wth the Lords and other his

Ma^{ts} Comission's that the said Contractors for Leases are limited to passe nothinge in rev'con for threescore yeres but what are Conteyned wthin the great entaile wherein this was not.

By meanes whereof they the said Courte and Lyons had both wronged the said Mr Garawaie and others Contracto^{rs} wth hym in takinge the same out of their booke of valewes to passe yt in rev'con Contrary to the Lords Covenants made wth the said Mr. Garawaie in that behalf besides they haue greatly preiudiced his Ma^{ty} in that the said Coale Myne is past in Lease at the yerely rent of x^{li} where for div's yeres last past his Ma^{ty} hath byn & still is answered xxx^{li} p. Annū.

The pe^t doe alsoe further shewe That before the said secreat and indirect pceedings in the said busines were knowne to theis pe^t they offered to the said Court for the Lease aforesaid cc^{li} more then yt cost them w^{ch} he not only scornefully refused demaunding a iooo^{li} more then he paid beinge much more then yt is or can be worth but alsoe threatneth yo^r Lo^{ps} said pe^t to frustrate and make void the Lease w^{ch} they have in possession wherein are 12 yeres or thereabouts yet to come w^{ch} yf he could doe would tend to their vtter vndoinge.

Maye yt therefore please yo^r good Lo^p that for as much as the peticon's haue byn antient teñts & therefore to be p^rferred before a stranger & for that they and their assignes to their great chargs haue nowe a suite in the Chequior Chamber dependinge yet vndetermined before yo^r Lo^p against the Earle of Northumb'land whoe p^rtends the greatest parte of the said Coale Myne to belong vnto hym and not to his Ma^{ty}. And for that they haue spent a great pte of their estates in accomplishinge and wyninge of the said Coale Myne And for that the said Leases indirectly past and pcured as aforesaid both to the dishonoringe and impeachinge of the Coven^{ts} of the Lords and others his Ma^{ts} Comissioners for sales contrary to the true meaninge of their

articles By reason whereof his Highnes is deceived in his said graunt And alsoe for that they had byn sure to haue had the same in p^rchase of Mr. Garaway as others in like cases have had ; had they not byn thus cunnily p^rvented by the said Court & Lyons All w^{ch} Considered would yt please yo^r good Lo^p to call the said Court and one William Bacon whoe is ioyned wth hym in the Conveyance for th^use of the said Lyons to Answer the premisses & to cause them to surrender vp their estates yf yt shall appeare to yo^r Lo^p to be indirectly procured as aforesaid, or otherwyse y^t yo^r peticoners maie haue such an end thereof as yo^r Lo^p shall thinke meete seeinge they are soe subtilly p^rvented of the p^rchase thereof against all right and equitye. And yo^r said peticoners their wyfes and Children will praye to god for yo^u.

I desire Mr Baron Altham to Consider hereof And ether to Compoude the Contrauersie, or to certefie mee what hee findeth Concerning the truth of this Petition together wth his opinion.

R. SALISBURY.

14 November 1610.

I haue appointed to Examine the contents of this peticon vppon Thursdays the xxijth of this Instant November at twoe of the Clock in the Afternoone at my Chamber at Sergeants Inne At w^{ch} time I would haue you whose names are here-vnder wrytten Attend me there.

JA. ALTHAM.

Mr Ingram
Mr Garrawaye
Mr Auditor Paddon
Wm Courte
Wm Bacon
Robert Chapman.

Uppon Examinacōn of this Matter and hearinge as well some of the Auditors as some of the Contractors I doe finde as followeth Namely

That the auncient Rente of the said Colemyne was x^{li} p annū, and that the Peticōners and their auncestors have byn auncient Tenants therof. And that in anno 44 of the late Queene Elizabeth the same was letten to the Peticōners for xxj yeares at x^{li} Rente, with a further p'vision that if any more Cole pytts were made and vsed then one, That then for ev'y such Cole pyt more made and vsed there should be x^{li} a yeare more payed.

I finde allsoe that for twoe yeares and more laste paste, thirty poundes p annū hath byn answered vnto the Kinge in respecte there hath byn three pyttes of Cole vsed.

Herevppon the said Colemynes have byn deliv'ed—three sev'all tymes from the Auditors to the Contractors to passe in ffee simple at the rate of 30^{li} p annū, and as landes lefte out of the greate Intayle and therefore to be sould in ffee simple and not to be letten for threeskore yeares.

Never the lesse I finde yt to be passed of late to the Contractors for Leases in Rev'tion for threeskore yeares as lande appoynted to be letten and after the rate of x^{li} p annū, and the Interest therof is by the Contractors Conveyed to one William Bacon and to one William Cowrte, w^{ch} Cowrte is the cheife Clerke vnder Mr. Padon Auditor of that County, and was before cheife Clerke to Mr. Stanley Deputy Auditor there who deliv'ed yt at thirty pounds p annū.

The p'ticuler for the lease soe passed of those Cole pytts was made by Mr. Auditor Paddon, whoe in the body of the p'ticuler and allsoe in a Memorand menconed the said increase of Rente, but the some in his Extr was only x^{li} and beinge a longe p'ticuler, the same Extr was observed more then the body of the Matter as yt seemeth.

But certen yt is that there is a double Error comitted in my opinion.

ffirste in that this is noe pte of the lande mencōed in the greate Intayle, and therfore was not to be letten for threeskore yeares, but to be sould in ffee simple by the true meaninge of the Articles, as I am informed, by some of the Auditors and Contractors, howsoevr some pte of the words may be strayned. Secondly and cheifly in that the Kinge hath byn answered a ffyne but after x^{li} p annū where his p^rsente Rente then and nowe in esse was 30^{li} p annū and soe the Kinge hath manifest wronge.

The only Remedy that I can thinke of is that the said Cowrte and Bacon may be ordered to yelde vppe the said Lease agayne to his Ma^{tie}, and that then his Ma^{tie} eyther doe selle the said Colepytts at the Rate of 30^{li} p annū, or Reserve them to himselfe at his pleasure, w^{ch} Course I have moved but yt would not be accepted.

27 November 1610. JA. ALTHAM

(STATE PAPERS, DOMESTIC, JAMES I., VOL. 58, NO. 18.)

Com. Northumbr.

Pcell of the possessions of the late Mon^{ry} of Tynemouth in the saide Countie.

The rente or farme of all those Colemynes to be digged or gotten from tyme to tyme in the feildes of Denton in the saide Countie with in the lymitts vnderwritten (that is to saye) ffrom Denton Burne where it falleth into the water of Tyne by the same water towards the west, vnto the bounde betweene Denton and Newborne. And from thence by the same bounde towards the North vnto the bounde betweene Denton and Newbigging, and by the same bounde towards the east vnto the bounde betweene Denton and Keynton, and from thence by the boundes between Keynton Bennell als Benwell and

Denton to a close called Nunes close towards the south, and by the west pte of the saide close to the arrable lande called Newraynes in the feildes of Denton aforesaide, and from thence betweene the arable (land) called Langbanke and the Raynes aforesaide vnto the village of Denton aforesaide and from thence by the waye called the olde Cole waye to a place called the vpperbarke hill and of the south pte of barkehill to the Ryver called Dentonbourne vnto the saide water of Tyne. Thus demysed to Anthony Errington and Roger Errington by 'tres pattents of the late soveraigne Lady Queene Elizabeth dated the xviiith daie of febr in the xliiiith yeere of her raigne for terme of xx^{tie} yeeres, Rendring the yeerelic rent of x^{li}. Notwithstanding there is but x^{li} reserved by the saide 'tres pattents the Kynges Ma^{tie} is aunswered xxx^{li} p ann by reason of a provisoe containyd in the same that yf the saide Patentees should digge more pitts then one, then they should paye x^{li} yeerlie for every such pitt. [In margin —xi yerres to come at Michās 1611.] The Contractors for lease did passe the said Colemynes for lx yeeres Rendring the saide yeerlie rent of xxx^{li} whoe sold there estate therein to Mr. Lyons and others of Newcastle Notwithstanding vppon complaynt made to yo^r lo: by the saide Erringtons and others that the premises were past to the saide Contractors at the yeerelic valewe of x^{li} yt pleased yo^r lo: to send for the saide Assignees and ordered them to surrender the saide lease vnto his Ma^{tie} And that they should be repayed of the fine which they paide to the saide Contractors, and of all charges which they had ben at otherwise about the saide lease, which were done accordingle. But howe much the somes were I knowe not, Mr. Byngly can best advertise yo^r lo: therein because the money was paide out of the Réceipte.

I have credable heard that the saide Colemynes are now worth m^{li} ccli p ann.

I knowe not of any late proceedinges touching the saide Colemynes.
[Endorsed] Denton Colemynes.

(STATE PAPERS, DOMESTIC WARRANT BOOK II., P. 183.)

James &c. To the T'rer and vndert'rer of o^r Exchecqr greeting:
 Whereas Robert Chapman, holding by Lease from John Eldred and
 William Whitmore Contracto^{rs} for leases halfe the Colemines of
 Denton in the County of Northumb'land for the yeaely rent of
 ffifteene pounds ffor the obteyninge of w^{ch} sd lease the sd Chapman
 hath disbursed the some of one hundred fflowerskore and seaventeene
 poundes, as by a bill of particulers, subscribed by the sd Chapman
 and deliuered to S^r James Altham Knight one of the Barons of
 o^r Exchecqr appeareth wh^{ch} sd lease of the sd Moitie the sd Chapman
 hath s'rendred to o^r vse before the sd Baron Altham, w^{ch} s'rrender
 wee are pleased to accept and allowe; Wherefore wee will and
 Comaund yo^u, out of o^r Treasure remayninge in the Receipt of o^r s^d
 Excheqr to pay or Cause to be paid vnto the sd Robert Chapman or
 to his assignes the aforesd some of 197^{li} in full paym^t and satisfaccōn
 of the sd some by him disbursed as aforesaid: And theise &c.
 Giuen &c. the eight day of December in y^e Eight yeaere of o^r Raigne
 of England ffrance and Ireland and of Scotland the xliiiijth.

(STATE PAPERS, DOMESTIC WARRANT BOOK II., P. 193.)

James &c. To the T'rer and vndert'rer of our Exchecqr greetinge:
 Whereas o^r welbeloued subiect William Court hath surrendred to
 o^r vse the Moitie of a lease of the Colemynes of Denton in the Countie
 of Northumberland of the yerely rent of one hundred Ninetie and
 nine poundes Eleauen shillings eight pence, as by Certificate vnder
 y^e hand of S^r James Altham Knight one of the Barons of o^r Exchecqr
 appeareth: Wee will and Comaund yo^u out of o^r treasure in the Receipt
 of o^r Exchecqr to pay or Cause to be paid to the sd William Court or
 his assignes the sd some of one hundred Nynety and Nyne poundes
 Eleauen shillinge Eight pence in full satisfaccōn and payment of the
 sd disbursem^{ts} wthout Accompt imprest or other Chardge to be sett

vpon him or them for the same or any part thereof. And theise &c. Giuen &c. the tenth day of ffebr: in y^e Eight yeare of o^r Raigne of England ffrance & Ireland & of Scotland the xliijth.

(STATE PAPERS, DOMESTIC, JAMES I., VOL. 62, NO. 6.)

Right Honorable, our dueties to yo^r Lo^p humblye remembred
Accordinge to your Honors direcon by your Letter of the
Eight of ffebruary last past for the takinge of bondes to his
Ma^{ty} vse, of his Highnes Tennants of the Colemynes of Denton
in the Countie of Northumberland, We haue taken ffyve seuerall
persons bound in two seuerall bondes for the payment of Nyne
Hundreth poundes to the Kings Ma^{ty} vse, at such tymes as in
yo^r Lo^{ps} said letter is prescribed. Of whose sufficiencie for the
securytie of such a some of money, we haue duelye considered, and
no doubt is to be made thereof. The bondes we shall in all ductie
humblye retorne and send to yo^r Lo^p so soone as conveyentlie we
can, And so restinge wth our vtmost service at yo^r Ho. comaund,
and our praier to the Almightye for the preseruacion of yo^r Lo^{ps} good
health wth increase of happines, we doe in all humylitie take o^r leaves.

Newcastle the ffyft day of March Anno dni 1610.

Yo^r Hono^{rs} humble at comaundm^t

Right Ho^{ble}

Although I advertised yo^r Lo^p by a former
letter to the same effectt of this enclosed,
yet doubtinge the bearers vncerten delyuerie
thereof, I thought fitt to send another.

W. JENISON, Maior.

WILLM JACKSON.

[Endorsed] 5 March 1610.

The Maior of Newcastle certifying that according to my
lo. directions they haue taken bond for paym^t of certaine
money for Denton Colemynes.

[Addressed] To the Right Honorable our very good Lord the Earle
of Salisbury Lord Highe Treasurer of England.

(II.)

MRS. MONTAGU AS AUTHORESS AND LEADER OF SOCIETY.

AMONG the literary ladies of the eighteenth century none was more distinguished for wit, learning, and social accomplishments than Mrs. Montagu. "Certainly," once said Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson, "she is the first woman for literary knowledge in England, and if in England, I hope I may say in the world." To which the sage replied, "I believe you may, Madam. She diffuses more knowledge in her conversation than any woman I know, or indeed almost any man." "Conversing with her," he observed on another occasion to the same lady, "you may find variety in one." Dr. Beattie averred that he had known several ladies eminent in literature, but she excelled them all, and in conversation she had more wit than any other person, male or female, he had known. Miss Hannah More put on record her opinion that Mrs. Montagu was not only the finest genius, but the finest lady she ever saw.

Of Mrs. Montagu it may be said, as Théophile Gautier said of Philoxène Boyer, that she "entered literature by the golden gate—a gate which does not often turn on its hinges." Rich and well-connected, she was able, a few years after her marriage, to assume the position of a leader of society, and to gather round her the most noted men and women of her time.

Her assemblies, to which the term "Blue-Stocking" came to be applied, at first took the form of literary breakfasts, and afterwards of evening "conversation parties"—conversation, principally of an intellectual character, taking the place of card-playing, then so prevalent

in fashionable society. They were held for over thirty years in her house in Hill Street, in the China-Room, "a closet lined with painted paper of Pekin, and furnished with the choicest movables of China," and for eighteen years in the palatial mansion, Montagu House, which she built in Portman Square, the "Feather-Room," so called from the hangings made by herself from the plumage of a variety of birds, being the scene of the meetings.

The "Blue-Stocking Society" consisted originally of Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Vesey (wife of Agmondesham Vesey), Mrs. Boscawen (wife of the admiral), Miss Carter, Lord Lyttelton, the Earl of Bath, better known as Mr. Pulteney, Horace Walpole, and Mr. Stillingfleet. Eminent men like Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick, and in fact everybody of distinction in that age, were guests of Mrs. Montagu. Sometimes she had "half the wits of the age" assembled in Montagu House. On June 13th, 1791, as many as seven hundred guests were accommodated to breakfast in the "Feather Room." The king and queen, several of the royal princesses, with "Luxembourgs, Montmorencies, and Czartoriskis," as well as wits and scholars, were entertained by Mrs. Montagu.

Wraxall styled her the "Madame du Deffaud of the English capital," and wrote that "her house constituted the central point of union for all those persons who already were known, or who emulated to become known by their talents and productions." The qualities on which her supremacy as a hostess rested were shrewdly noted by this writer. "She possessed," he said, "great natural cheerfulness and a flow of animal spirits, loved to talk, and talked well on almost every subject, led the conversation, and was qualified to preside in her circle; but her manner was more dictatorial and sententious than conciliating or diffident."

Though it is chiefly as a lover of learning and a patroness of literature that she is known—"the female Mæcenas of Hill Street" Miss Hannah More styled her in one of her letters—she gave proof

of her literary capacity in three of the *Dialogues of the Dead*, published in 1760 under the name of Lord Lyttelton; in her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets, with some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Monsieur de Voltaire* (1769); and in her numerous letters, two volumes of which were published by her nephew in 1809 and two more in 1813, and many others, printed in such works as Forbes' *Life of Beattie*, W. Roberts' *Life of Hannah More*, Tytler's *Memoirs of Henry Home of Kames*, etc.

The three dialogues written by her are witty and learned, with a smart vein of satire running through them. The first (No. 26) is a contention between Hercules and Cadmus as to the respective value of deeds and ideas, of a life of action and strenuous effort and a life of thought and speculation. Cadmus points out how much mankind owes to men who never quitted their closets, and how the writings of the sages not only preserve the memory of heroic deeds, but incite to virtue and indicate the right sphere of action. Hercules, on the other hand, does not see that it can signify to the world what an idle man has been thinking, and maintains that the spirit of heroism acts by a sort of inspiration, and wants neither the experience of history nor the doctrines of the philosophers to direct it.

The second dialogue (No. 27), between Mercury and a modern fine lady, is a clever satire, full of epigrammatic points, on the women of fashion who made diversion the business of their lives, frequenting the play, the opera, balls, and card assemblies when the novelty of the amusement had worn off, in order to be thought *du bon-ton*, and thereby ruining their health and neglecting their domestic duties. "Mrs. Modish" was skilfully drawn and soon became "a great favourite with the town."

The third dialogue (No. 28) is between Plutarch, Charon, and a modern bookseller, the subject of it being the growing taste of the

period for fiction. Charon commits to the care of Plutarch a modern bookseller who had just landed, very unwillingly, on the infernal shores. Plutarch learns from the new shade that his *Lives* were a drug in the market, that it was the lives of the highwaymen and the lives of men who never lived which enriched the trade. "No book," states the bibliopole, "is fit for a gentleman's reading which is not devoid of facts and of doctrines, that he may not grow a pedant in his morals or conversation." Richardson's *Clarissa* and Fielding's works are highly commended, the latter for their true spirit of comedy, their exact representation of Nature, and the fine moral touches to be found in them.

Mrs. Montagu's *Essay on Shakespeare compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets* was provoked by the contemptuous strictures made by Voltaire on Shakespeare, and the absurd comparisons he drew between our great poet and Corneille in favour of the latter.

We of the nineteenth century may be inclined to take the view of the Dowager Countess Gower, that this essay, "in *vindication* of Shakespeare, who *wants* none," must be deemed "a work of supererogation," but in estimating the value of a work like this it is necessary to consider the character of the offender, "a writer of universal fame," expressing his opinions "through the medium of an almost universal language," and to take into account the standards of poetic taste, artificial and conventional as they were, which had become fashionable at the time.

After two able disquisitions on "Dramatic Poetry" and "Historical Drama," in the latter of which she notes how naturally Shakespeare's general maxims arise out of the action, and lose themselves again in it, in contrast with the moral sentences interspersed among the tragedies of Euripides, she gives a critical analysis marked by sound common sense, if not by subtlety, of the first and second parts of *Henry IV.*, showing with what dexterity Shakespeare unfolds his characters and prepares his events; she deals with the subject of Preternatural Beings,

expounds Macbeth, and compares Corneille's *Cinna* with Shakespeare's *Death of Julius Cæsar*.

Very vigorously does she expose the defects of the French classical drama, pointing out the stupid conventions by which the catastrophe is narrated instead of represented, the artificial character of the dialogue which, in a piece intended to conceal the art and artist, bring both before the eyes of the spectator, the cold and uninteresting declamations and the false conceits and affectations. Voltaire is shown to have quite misunderstood the passages he translates, and to have been utterly ignorant of English prosody.

The reception accorded to the essay was very gratifying to the authoress. The first edition was soon exhausted, a second edition appeared in 1770, and a third in 1772. Though Johnson, while admitting he had not read the book through, expressed an adverse opinion of it, Reynolds, Lord Lyttelton, and Lord Grenville gave it high praise, which was surpassed, however, by Cowper in a letter to Lady Hesketh, May 27th, 1788.

"I no longer wonder," he says, "that Mrs. Montagu stands at the head of all that is called learned, and that every critic veils his bonnet to her superior judgment. I am now reading and have reached the middle of her essay on the genius of Shakespeare—of which, strange as it may seem, though I must have read it formerly, I had absolutely forgotten the existence. The learning, the good sense, the sound judgment, and the wit displayed in it fully justify, not only my compliment, but all compliments that either have been already paid to her talents or shall be paid hereafter."

It is in her letters perhaps that the literary abilities of Mrs. Montagu are best displayed. Though prolix and often laboured, they contain some remarkably acute observations on the social life and manners of her time, and are full of brilliant epigrams, moral maxims, fine sentiments, and vivid description of persons and places.

(III.)

ENGRAVED PORTRAITS OF MRS. MONTAGU.

- (1.) Engraved by R. Cooper from a miniature by Zinck. Published May 10, 1809, by T. Cadell and W. Davis, Strand, London.

1740.—“ I sat for my picture this morning to Zinck, and I believe it will be like. I am in Anne Boleyn dress.”—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 120.

This engraving appears in the first volume of Mrs. Montagu's *Letters*, published in 1809. It is reproduced in the present volume, p. 50.

- (2.) Engraved by Thomas Holloway. Published by L. Sewell, Cornhill, 1785. A medallion portrait engraved by Holloway appears in the *European Magazine* (1800, Part II. p. 243).

- (3.) “ J. Chapman, Sc.”

- (4.) Published September 1, 1815, by J. W. H. Payne.

- (5.) “ Lowry, Sc.”

- (6.) No date or particulars.

- (7.) Engraved by Ridley from a picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Published by T. Bellamy at the *Monthly Mirror* Office, King Street, Covent Garden, September 30, 1798.

- (8.) From the original picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the possession of her nephew, Matthew Montagu, Esq., M.P. Drawn by W. Evans; engraved by T. Cheesman. Published May 26, 1809, by T. Cadell and W. Davis, Strand, London.

- (9.) Engraved by J. R. Smith from an original painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the possession of his Grace the Lord Primate of all Ireland. To whom this Plate is Inscrib'd by his Grace's much oblig'd and obedient Servt. John Raphael Smith. Publish'd April 10, 1776, by J. R. Smith, No. 10 Bateman's Buildings, Soho Square, London. H 20; Sub. 17⁵/₈; W. 14.

"T. Q. L. sitting, directed, facing, and looking downwards towards right; hair brushed back from face, cap, black tie round fastened under chin, ear-ring, rich brocade dress, right hand placed over left in lap, fluted pillar and curtain in background, trees in distance to right."—*British Mezzotint Portraits*, by J. C. Smith, vol. iii. p. 1285. This portrait is reproduced in the present volume, p. 67.

(10.) Engraved by E. Bartolozzi, Esq., R.A., from the original picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds. London, published January 1st, 1792, by E. Harding, Fleet Street. It is one of the plates in S. & E. Harding's *Shakespeare Illustrated*, published in 1793.

Mrs. Montagu's portrait was painted by Hoare in 1751.

"Mr. Montagu has made me lay by my dress [as the Queen Mother] to be painted in when I see Mr. Hoare again. His portrait is thought like, but too full for my thin jaws."—*Letters*, vol. iii. p. 159.

(IV.)

NAMES OF COAL-PITS ON THE EAST DENTON ESTATE

ABOUT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY.

Union.	Montagu.	Elizabeth.	Prospect.
Close.	Engine.	Matthew.	Francis.
Green.	View.	Recovery.	A.
Trial.	Robinson.	Edward.	C.
Broom.	Mill.	Supply.	Jane.
Good Intent.	Fortune.	William.	New Engine.
Success.	Good-Luck.	Catherine.	John.

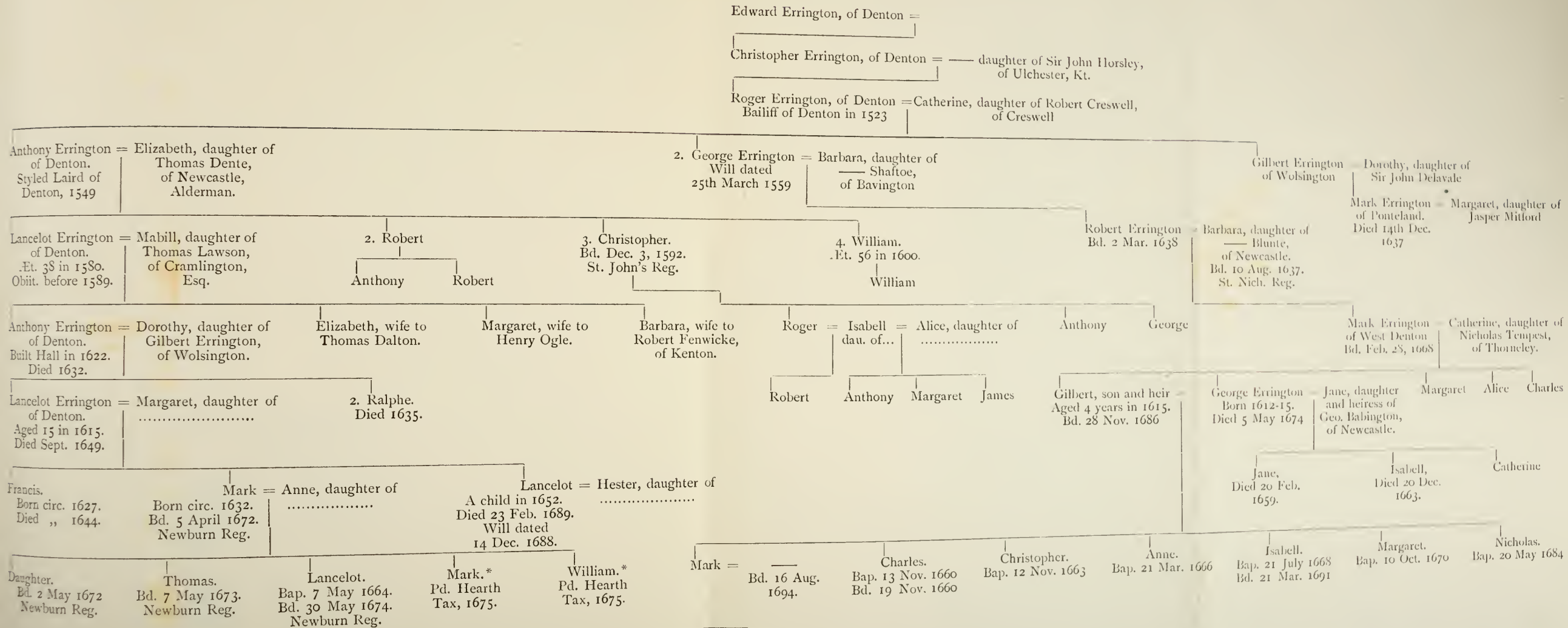
(V.)

FIELD-NAMES ON THE EAST DENTON ESTATE.

(FROM ISAAC THOMPSON'S PLAN OF 1754.)

North of the road from Newcastle to Black Heddon.		South of Newcastle and Carlisle road and west of old waggon- way.
Ainsley's Close.	Middle Fields.	Broom Pasture.
West Field.	Great Park.	Hedley's Close.
Middle Field.	West Field.	High Wood.
East Field.	Middle Field.	Middle Close.
North Pasture.	Horse Close.	Boggle Hole.
Pitt Holes.	The Whins	Horse Close.
	[The Hall Whins in an earlier plan.]	Rye Grass Close.
North of the Newcastle and Car- lisle road and west of the old waggonway near the hall.	Whinny Holes.	Little Pasture.
High Corn Field.	Little Park.	House Close.
Low Corn Field.	Short Bank.	Ben's Close.
Crawford's Pasture.	Long Bank.	West Close.
Hedley's Pasture.	High Field.	Captain's Close.
Hedley's Meadow.	Long Banks.	The Mount.
	Square Close.	
North of the Newcastle and Car- lisle road and east of the old waggonway.	Long Reins.	South of Newcastle and Carlisle road and east of old waggon- way.
North Field.	The Reins.	High Stoney Lee or Lees.
South Field.	Short Reins.	Barn Close.
Corn Close.	Long (? Lower) Reins.	Back Field.
Fogg Close.	Mill Hill.	Stoney Lee.
Anty's Walls.	Stoney Close.	Wash-house Close.
West Field.	Pea Field.	Corn Field.
Turnip Field.	White Field.	Banks or Bark Hill.
The Whinns.	Low White Field.	Corn Field.
Coal-way Close.	Beaumont's Field.	Justice Close.
Borehole Close.	Four Horse Close.	Ruddy Hill.
	Calf Close.	Mole's Meadow.
	Green Close.	

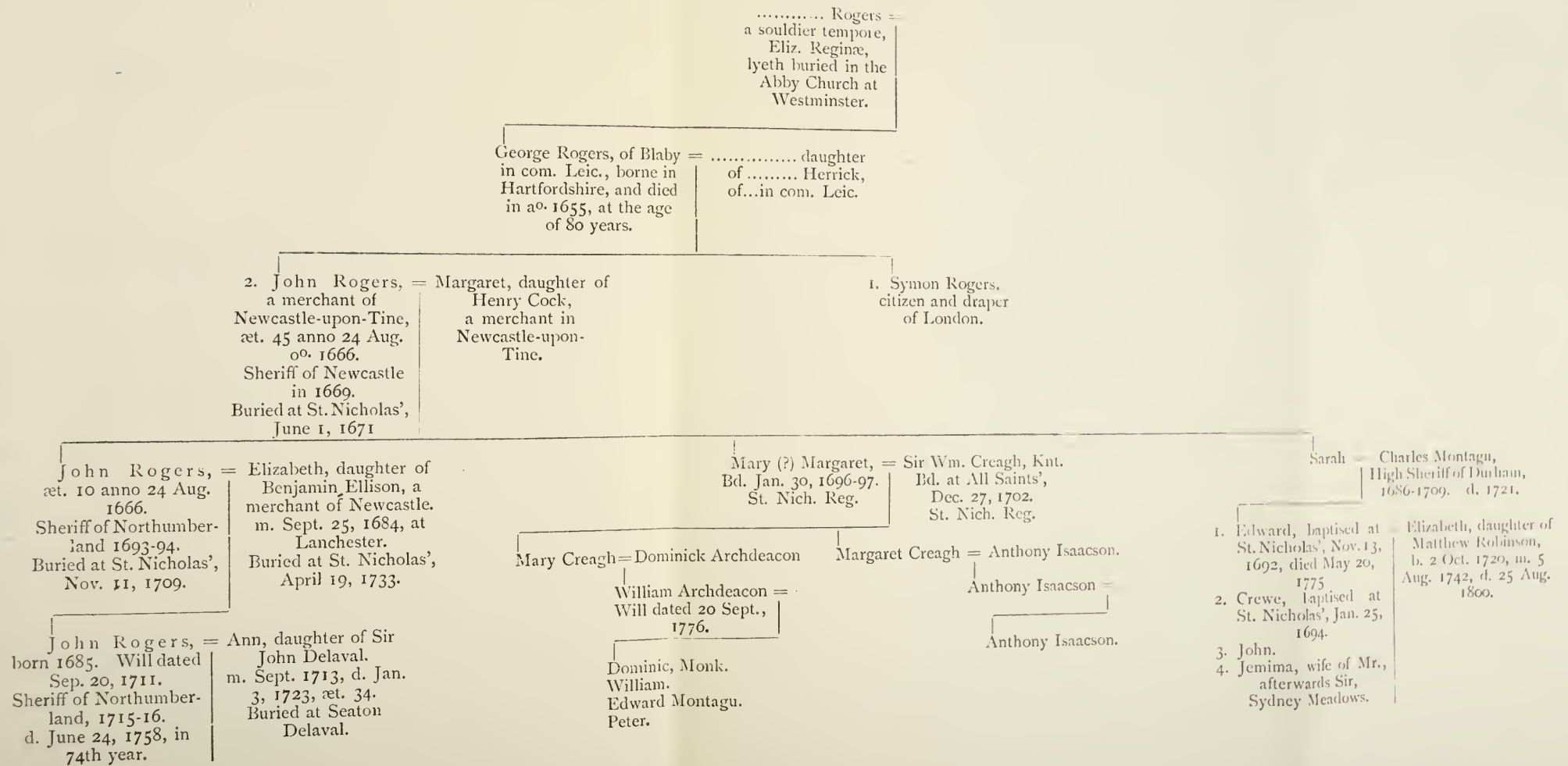
PEDIGREE OF THE ERRINGTONS OF DENTON.



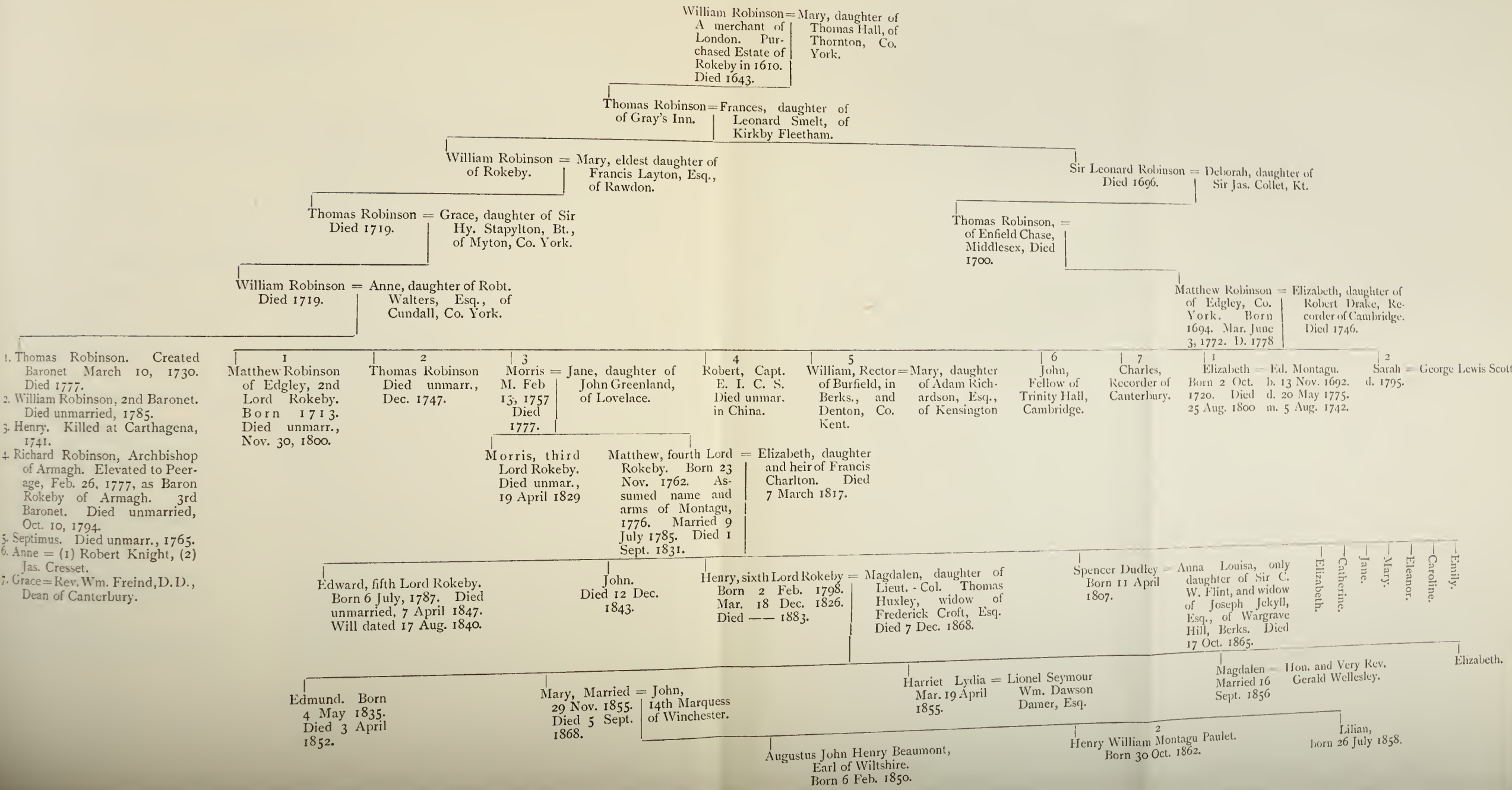
* These persons are assumed to be the sons of Mark Errington, who died in 1672. It is to be regretted that the pedigree at this period and after cannot be traced with any degree of certainty.

(VII.)

THE ROGERS PEDIGREE.



THE ROKEBY PEDIGREE.



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